Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita

The Life & Teachings of Shirdi Sai Baba

the original in Marathi by

Govind Raghunath Dabholkar - Hemadpant

translated in English by

Zarine

Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita

The Life & Teachings of Shirdi Sai Baba

All rights reserved
© **Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi**

First edition February, 2004
by **Sai Press India Pvt. Ltd.**
New Delhi - 110020

Second edition - April 2008 - 5,000 copies
Third edition - April 2009 - 10,000 copies
Published by
Shri J.M. Sasane, Chairman
Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi,
P.O. Shirdi - 423 109, Disst. Ahmednagar
Tel. No. 02423-258500 Fax: 02423-258770
E-mail : saibaba_anr@sancharnet.in
Website: http://www.shrisaibabasansthan.org

Mumbai Office:
Sai Niketan, 804 B, Dr. Ambedkar Marg,
Dadar, Mumbai - 400 014
Tel: 022-24166556 Fax: 022-24150798
E-mail: saidadar@bom3.vsnl.net.in

Designed and Printed by
Sai Security Printers Pvt. Ltd.
152, DLF Industrial Area,
Faridabad-121003 (Haryana)
Phone : 0129-2276370, 2272277
E-mail : sspdel@saiprinters.com

Price - Rs. 135.00

Foreword to the Second Revised Edition

The daily 'Parayan' (recitation) of "Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita"for Sai devotees is as pious as that of Srimad Bhagvatgita, Ramayana or any other epic. Since the original Satcharita by Govind Raghunath Dabholkar (Hemadpant) is in Marathi, Smt. Zarine of Mumbai, who was an ardent devotee of Baba undertook on herself the task of translating the Marathi version of the Holy Book, word to word into English, to meet the needs of an ever growing number of Sai devotees all over the country and abroad.

The first edition of this book was published by M/s Sai Press India Pvt. Ltd. and had a limited distribution. Since it was considered essential by the original publisher that the book be available to devotees all over, they offered its copyright to Shri Sai Baba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi and this has been gratefully accepted.

I have great pleasure in presenting the second revised edition of this monumental work before the devotees of Shri Sai Samarth on behalf of the Board of management of Shri Sai Baba Sansthan Trust. I hope that the devotees who read this book and adopt the right code of conduct will be immensely benefited.

Smt. Zarine is no longer with us to share this happiness having merged in the lotus feet of Baba on 28th December 2006.

Bow to Sri Sai. Peace be to all.

14th April 2008
Shri Ram Navami

Jayant Murlidhar Sasane
Chairman, Shri Sai Baba Sansthan Trust

Since the time when Sai has graced me and favoured me, I think of him only day and night. He has destroyed my fear of worldly existence and the fear of the cycle of birth and death. (Ch. 1, ovi 78)

Not for me the repetition of any other prayers; not for me any other penance. I behold only one form – the Pure Form of Sai. (Ch. 1, ovi 79)

As soon as one gazes upon Sai's face, thirst and hunger are forgotten. What is the value of other pleasures? One forgets the worldly sorrows. (Ch. 1, ovi 80)

As one looks at Baba's eyes, one forgets one's self. Waves of love swell from within and the whole world is drowned in the raptures of devotion. (Ch. 1, ovi 81)

Action, religion, scriptures, *puranas*, *yoga*, sacrifices, performance of prescribed religious ceremonies, pilgrimage to holy places and acts of penance – all these are at Sai's feet for me. (Ch. 1, ovi 82)

Continuous observance of the teachings of the Guru, and firm adherence to them brings unshakable faith and unwavering stability. (Ch. 1, ovi 83)

Preface

Rare are instances when an individual makes such a profound impact on the minds of people, irrespective of their caste and creed, as does my 'Shahi Baba' more than a century after His Incarnation.

Antonio Rigopoulos, in the prologue to his book, 'The Life and Teachings of Sai Baba of Shirdi', says that "millions of people revere and worship Him as a God, an *avatar*, and as a teacher of tolerance and mutual harmony between Hinduism and Islam". And, the whole purpose of an *avatar* is to make you realise that you are part of God.

Rigopoulos has surmised that "his ever-expanding fame is due, in the first place, to his alleged powers as a miracle worker and a healer.

"Besides this fundamental characteristic of the saint of Shirdi, his personality remains, overall, enigmatic and obscure. His birthplace and religious affiliation are a mystery to all, and to-day people still debate whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim.

"What is certain is that a young ascetic identified by the villagers as a Muslim, reached the hamlet of Shirdi one day in the last century (i.e. in the 19th century); that he was attributed the name of Sai Baba; and that he lived in the village (in Ahmednagar district of the State of Maharashtra) till the end of his days, dwelling in a dilapidated mosque.

"He was of unpredictable moods - loving, harsh, humorous, abusive! But he had spiritual charisma whether he was speaking in parables or observing prolonged silences. "Sai Baba's whole persona, his movements, words and glances conveyed a tangible and immediate experience of the sacred.

"The holy preceptor by the word lighted a lamp; thereby was shattered darkness of the temple of the self; and the unique chamber of jewels was thrown up".

The people of Shirdi worshipped Sai as their God. He dwelt in Shirdi as the embodiment of pure Existence, Knowledge and Bliss - the Sadguru, who was King of Kings! King of *Yogis*! Absolute *Brahman*! While eating, drinking, working in their backyards and fields, doing various household chores, they always remembered Sai and sang of His Glory. Initially, however, Baba did not allow anyone to worship Him, that is, to do *archanam*. Whenever any one approached Him with the *puja thali* or platter, Baba would get angry and even upset the platter. But when He saw the pure devotion of the people, He relented. Individual worship of Baba, in the

mosque, existed even around 1894! There was an opposition to it by some Muslims, led by the *Kazi* of Sangamner. Mhalsapati was ahead of most in his worship of Baba, followed by Nanasaheb Chandorkar. Megha also did his *puja* in style. But it was Dr. Pandit a friend of Tatyasaheb Noolkar who earned the distinction of applying sandalpaste for the first time on Baba's forehead by drawing a *Tripundra* i.e. three horizontal lines, as he did to his own Guru. Till then, only Mhalsapati used to apply the sandalpaste to Baba; and, that too, only to His throat.

"For the worship of other deities, the articles required and the ritual are specific. But, for your worship, there is nothing in the world which is worthy of you!", says Das Ganu. The devotees worshipped the manifested Sadguru Shri Sainath *Maharaj* at Shirdi as they pleased. Baba used a sack-cloth for His seat, which the bhaktas covered with a small beautiful mattress, and put a bolster at His back. Baba respected the feelings of His devotees and gave them full freedom to worship Him, as they liked. Some waved *chamaras* or whisks before Him, some played musical instruments, some laved His hands and feet, others applied incense and attars, some gave Him betel leaf and nuts, some offered *arghya* for worship of His feet, and some offered *naivedya*.

Congregational worship of Sai Baba commenced with the noon *arati* around 1909; followed by the bed-time *arati* after the *Chavadi* procession from 10th of December 1909, on alternate days. The morning *arati* also took place at the *Chavadi* before Baba went to the *Dwarakamayi*. The practice of evening *arati* started much later.

It occurred to Govindrao Raghunath Dabholkar to present Baba's legendary life, while he was intermittently living in Shirdi from 1910 to 1916, after he witnessed Baba grinding wheat and then having the flour thrown on the village border limits to cast out cholera. This incident was the inspiration for "Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita" for Dabholkar, as he contemplated Baba's grinding, almost every day, not of the wheat, but sins and the mental and physical afflictions and miseries of his devotees. He sought Baba's permission to write about His life and it was granted. He was directed to make notes and maintain records which he did. The actual writing was undertaken after Baba's *Mahasamadhi*.

Dabholkar's poetic work runs into fifty-three chapters, modelled on the 'Eknathi Bhagvat', containing more than nine thousand ovis or verses. Every chapter is a mixture of philosophy, anecdotes and teachings. His book is akin to the Vedas for Sai's devotees.

More than two decades ago, a casual conversation with my Revered Sivanesan Swamiji, at Shirdi, launched me into reading the Sri Sai Samartha Satcharita in Marathi - or, rather, have it read to me, as I did not know the language at all.

Since then it has been a long journey. While struggling to absorb what my teacher, Mrs. Mohini Varde, taught, I began writing it out in English. After I had completed more than half the fifty-three chapters, the study was disrupted by a chain of events, which included the death of my teacher's father and that of my own darling mother, Dhunmai. Revered Sivanesan Swamiji is the fount of my inspiration for all my works including this one.

My published works, prompted the Shirdi Sansthan of Sri Sai Baba to wonder if I had worked on the Satcharita. At the instance of the Sansthan, the manuscript was submitted to the Shri Sai Leela Magazine, which published it chapter by chapter, over many years. The need to publish it in book form was felt but not pursued.

It is thanks to Shri Motilal Gupta, Founder Chairman of the Shirdi Sai Baba Temple Society, Sai Dham, Tigaon Road, Faridabad (Haryana) that Shri Vijay R. Raghavan of Sai Press India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, came to Shirdi about one year ago; and he enthusiastically undertook the task without a thought of any gains, monetary or otherwise, for himself. Heartfelt thanks are due to both of them.

Both of them have dedicated themselves to embellishing the publication with sketches and photographs, without sparing any time or effort, in addition to looking after every other aspect of printing of the book.

Ms. Vinny Chitluri's book "Ambrosia in Shirdi – Part I" was published in July 2002. The photographs she had painstakingly collected were offered for the Satcharita, with complete devotion for Sainath, on our request. She also was instrumental in getting some sketches made and liaised closely with Shri Raghavan to enhance the value of the book. Indeed, words are inadequate to thank my dear friend for her precious inputs.

My dear and revered friend late Lt. Col. M. B. Nimbalkar's prose version of the Satcharita in Marathi has been of immense help and I am deeply grateful to him for his permission to reproduce the chronological index of events painstakingly prepared by him, which appears slightly modified towards the end. How I wish I could have placed this book in his hands!

Mr. Suresh Chandra Gupta of New Delhi has spared no pains in helping with the final proof reading and has given many valuable suggestions. We are truly privileged to have his help. This has been done to render his devotion to Sainath.

Needless to say that the translation would not have been possible without Mrs. Usha Tembe's patience, perseverance, erudition and dedication. She was a stranger when we embarked on this task, but grew into a friend. It was Mrs. Tembe who sought and obtained the help of the erudite Dr. Moreshwar Paradkar, Professor of Sanskrit, who worked on many a difficult passage of this devotional work to enable us to translate several chapters. Both Mrs. Tembe and I acknowledge our indebtedness to Dr. Paradkar.

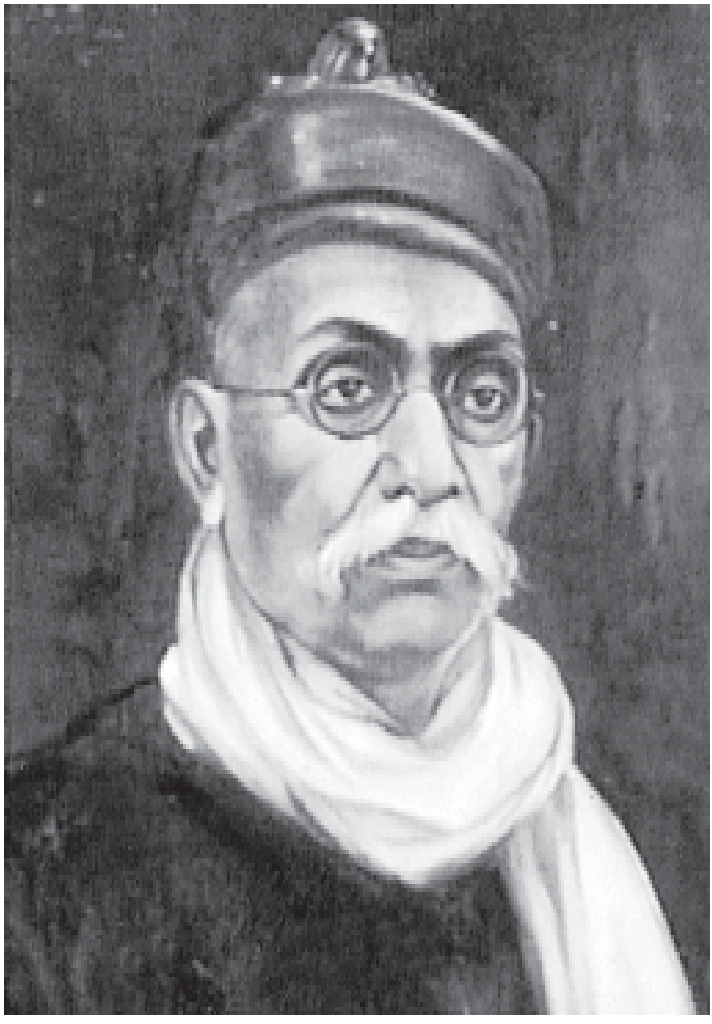
With an upsurge of devotion to Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi currently sweeping the world, I trust that Sri Sainath's devotees will welcome the effort and will make use of this book for their daily prayers and inspire their families to do likewise.

The imperfections are mine; and I seek the readers' generosity in overlooking them.

'Nata- Shahi'
69, Worli Sea Face,
Mumbai- 400 025

Zarine

30th October 2003



Govind R. Dabholkar – Annasaheb alias Hemadpant
(1856 – 1929)

He, by Baba's grace, had the privilege to compose, in Marathi, Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita, a Gita for Sai devotees.

HEMADPANT
(Govind R. Dabholkar – Annasaheb)

(The Author of the original Sree Sai Satcharita in Marathi)

We have seen that Sai Satcharita was composed by Annasaheb Dabholkar, but the work itself says at the end of each chapter that it was composed by Hemadpant at the inspiration of Sai Baba. Now the readers will ask, who is this Hemadpant? For their information we say that Hemadpant is a name or significant title bestowed on Mr. Dabholkar by Sai Baba Himself at the first meeting. How and when it was bestowed and how significant and prophetic it turned out to be, the author himself has told us in the 2nd Chapter of the Satcharita. For the present we give below a short sketch of his life.

The author Mr. Dabholkar was born in 1859 in a poor Adya Gowd Brahmin family in a small town by name Kelave-Mahim in Thana district. His father and grand-father were religious and devout persons. As the family was poor, his primary education was done in his native-place and then his English education up to the 5th standard was finished at Poona. On account of his adverse circumstances he could not continue his education any further. He could only manage to pass the Public Service Examination of the time. Then he had to accept the post of a school-master in his native place. His good nature, intelligence and work were noted by Mr. Sabaji Chintaman Chitnis who was then *Mamlatdar* in the Colaba district. He appointed him first as a *Talati* (village-officer), thence as an English clerk and afterwards *Aval* (head) clerk in the *Mamlatdar*'s Court. Sometime afterwards he was appointed as a Forest Settlement Officer and again as a Special Officer on Famine Relief Works at Broach (Gujrat). The duties of the post were most satisfactorily discharged by him. In 1901 he was appointed as a *Mamlatdar* of Shahapur (Thana district) and in 1903 as a Resident Magistrate 1st class, at Bandra where he served till 1907. Thence he was transferred to Murbad, Anand, Borsad (Kheda district) and was again posted in 1910 at Bandra as a Resident Magistrate. It was in this year that he had the good fortune to go to Shirdi and get the *darshan* of Sai Baba. He retired from service in 1916. After this, he again got a temporary Govt. job but that was of very short duration. After his retirement he served Sai Baba heart and soul till Baba's *samadhi* and afterwards managed very skillfully and efficiently Sai Baba's Shirdi Sansthan till his death, which occured in 1929. He left behind him his wife, one son and 5 daughters, most of whom were married to suitable and worthy husbands.

(Source: First edition of N.V. Gunaji's book in English adapted from the original in Marathi)

Contents

Particulars	Page Nos.
Preface	v-viii
Hemadpant - author of the original 'Sree Sai Satcharita' in Marathi	ix-x
Foreword - to the first Marathi edition by Hari Sitaram alias Kakasaheb Dikshit	1-17
Chapter 1 - The Invocation	18-30
Chapter 2 - The Purpose of the Narration relating to the recounting of the Naming Ceremony	31-47
Chapter 3 - The Consent given to Write this Book	48-63
Chapter 4 - The Appearance of Sai Samartha	64-78
Chapter 5 - The Re-appearance of Sree Sai	79-92
Chapter 6 - The Narration of the Story of Ram-janam Celebrations	93-105
Chapter 7 - The Narration of Various Stories	106-117
Chapter 8 - The Incarnation of Sai Samartha	118-130
Chapter 9 - Untitled by Dabholkar	131-143
Chapter 10 - The Greatness of Sree Sai Samartha	144-156
Chapter 11 - The Description of Sree Sai's Greatness	157-169
Chapter 12 - The Darshan of Ram - Sree Sant Gholap	170-183
Chapter 13 - The Cure of Bhimaji's Tuberculosis	184-198

Chapter 14
- Ruttonji's Meeting with Sai 199-215

Chapter 15
- The Story of Cholkar's Sugar 216-225

Chapter 16
- The Narration of the Knowledge of Brahman 226-239

Chapter 17
- The Narration of the Knowledge of Brahman 240-253

Chapter 18
- Grace that was Bestowed on Me 254-266

Chapter 19
- Grace that was Bestowed on Me 267-286

Chapter 20
- The Lesson of the Essence of the Ishavasya 287-297

Chapter 21
- Bestowing Grace 298-307

Chapter 22
- Warding Off of Untimely Death 308-325

Chapter 23
- The Spectacle of the Leela of Guru and Disciple 326-341

Chapter 24
- Splendid Humour 342-352

Chapter 25
- Achieving the Devotee's Welfare by Granting What is Desired Deeply 353-362

Chapter 26
- Prevention of Epilepsy and Suicide & Stabilisation of Faith at One's Own Guru's Feet 363-374

Chapter 27
- Bestowal of Initiation and Grace 375-390

Chapter 28
- Narration of Visions 391-407

Chapter 29
- Narration of Stories of Dreams 408-421

Chapter 30
- Narration of Vows and Other Stories 422-430

Chapter 31
- The Greatness of Darshan 431-442

Chapter 32
- Narration of the Guru's Greatness 443-456

Chapter 33
- The Power of the Udi 457-475

Chapter 34
- The Greatness of Udi 476-488

Chapter 35
- The Erasure of Doubts and Misapprehensions and the Embellishment of Vibhuti 489-505

Chapter 36
- The All-Pervasiveness of Sai and the Fulfilment of His Blessings 506-518

Chapter 37
- Description of the Chavadi 519-536

Chapter 38
- Description of the Cooking and the Vessel 537-551

Chapter 39
- The Discourse on the Essence of the Verse of the Geeta and the Creation of the Samadhi Mandir 552-565

Chapter 40
- The Narration of the Udyapan Story 566-578

Chapter 41
- The Bestowal of Sai's Grace and Favour 579-590

Chapter 42
- Leaving of the Body by Sainath 591-602

Chapter 43
- Leaving of the Body by Sainath 603-616

Chapter 44
- Leaving of the Body by Sainath 617-630

Chapter 45
- The Greatness of the Feet of Sree Guru 631-641

Chapter 46
- Trip to Kashi and Gaya; Narration of the Birth of Goats 642-651

Chapter 47
- Narration of Story told by Sree Sai 652-665

Chapter 48
- Granting of Favour to Doubting Devotee 666-678

Chapter 49
- Testing the Saint and the Control of the Mind 679-692

Chapter 50
- Removal of Ignorance 693-710

Chapter 51
- A Triad of Stories of Three Devotees 711-730

Chapter 52
- An overall view, which summarises the Book 731-738

Chapter 53
- "Avataranika" (Epitome) 739-754

Colour Photo Section 755-770

Choronological Index of Events 771-785
- by Lt. Col. M.B. Nimbalkar
(Original in Marathi, English translation by Zarine, with adaptation)

Glossary 786-795

1
The Invocation

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. At the beginning of any undertaking, wise persons praise tutelar[1] deities and invoke their grace for its completion without impediments.
2. They do the invocation to avert all impediments and for the fulfilment of their desires. I do obeisance to all.
3. First of all I worship Ganapati - Vakratund, Heramb image, Lord of the fourteen schools of knowledge[2], auspicious figure who is Elephant-visaged.
4. Fourteen universes[3] are contained in Your belly; that is why You are known as immense-bodied; holding the lustrous axe in Your hands with a desire to cut the difficulties of the devotees.
5. O, Lord Gananatha, Gajanana, the destroyer of obstacles and assuager of pain, grant me the grace to complete my vows. I prostrate[4] myself before You.
6. You are the helper of the devotees. Impediments roll down and are subdued at Your feet. If You directly face them, all deficiencies will vanish.
7. You are the ship in the ocean of life; the flame of light in the darkness of ignorance. Look after me joyfully with prosperity and perfection[5].
8. Hail, hail to Thee whose vehicle is the mouse, destroyer of the forest of impediments. You are the son of *Girija*[6] who has an auspicious visage. I do obeisance to You.
9. May I attain the completion of this work without difficulties. Therefore, I have followed this custom of offering obeisance to the beloved deities with respect, for the attainment of all good and auspiciousness.
10. Sai himself is Gajanan Ganapati; Sai himself has the axe[7] in his hand.

Completely annihilate my difficulties. I now begin my sacred work.

11. Sai himself is Bhalachandra; himself is Gajanan, with a single tusk and elephant-like ears. He is the formidable one with a broken tusk, the destroyer of the forest of difficulties.

12. O, the holiest of holies, with an immense body, Ganapati! there is no difference between you and Sai. Please take me to your abode where you reside in contentment.

13. Now, I bow down to Saraswati, the daughter of Brahma, who inspires the intelligence. Make my intelligence thy swan[8] and control it.

14. She has the *veena*[9] of Brahma in her hand, and a vermillion mark on her forehead. She is clad in virginal white and her vehicle is the swan. Grant me your blessings.

15. She is the Deity of Speech and Mother of the Universe. Without her grace no literary activity is possible; and, without her blessings, I will not be able to write these sacred verses.

16. This Mother of the Universe is the source of the Vedas. She is the splendour of knowledge and the excellence of the mind. May the nectar of the *Sai Samartha Charita* be drunk by the people through me.

17. Sai himself is the Divine Saraswati, holding the *Aum* chanting *veena* in his hands and himself sings the story of his own life, for the salvation of the devotees.

18. Obeisance to Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar respectively representing creation, preservation and destruction of the universe and epitome of *Raja, Satva, Tama*[10].

19. O, Sainath, Light Incarnate, for us you are Ganesh, Lord of Savitri, Ramesh and Umesh[11].

20. You are the *Sadguru* for us. You are the ship to carry us across life's ocean. We, the devotees, are its passengers. Take us to the yonder shore.

21. Without some good deeds of the past births, how could we have got such a place at your feet?

22. My obeisance to the Family Deity, Narayana Adinatha[12], dweller of the milky ocean and remover of all sorrows.

23. Parshuram reclaimed the ocean and created a new land, which is called Konkan[13]. There appeared Narayan.

24. I am totally dependent on Narayan, the indweller of all beings, who controls all the living beings and protects them with his merciful glance, for his inspiration.

25. Similarly, I make obeisance with utmost respect to my original

ancestor, a great sage of Gowd region, who was brought by Bhargava, for the completion of his sacrifice or *yajñya*.

26. Now I bow down to the king of the *Rishis*, Bharadwaj, who is the founder of my gotra[14] belonging to the *Rigveda* branch, Shakal being our ancestral name, the Brahmin caste hailing from Gowd.

27. Further I bow down to the Brahmin, the incarnation of the Supreme Brahman and then to Yagñavalkya[15], Bhrigu[16], Parashar[17] and Narad[18], the best of the *yogis*.

28. Also, obeisance to Vyas of the *Vedas* fame, Parashar, to Sanak Sanandan-Sanatkumar, Shuka[19], Shaunak, the composer of the *Sutras*, to Vishwamitra[20] and Vashishtha[21].

29. And also to Valmiki[22], Vamdev[23], Jaimini[24], Vaishampayan[25] and others. I prostrate myself at the feet of the nine great *yogis* and *munis*[26].

30. I now make my obeisance to the saints and the virtuous – Nivritti[27] – Dñyaneshwar[28], Muktabai[29], Sopan[30], Eknath[31] and his Guru Janardhana, Tukaram[32], Kanha (Patra)[33] and Narhari[34].

31. This book will not suffice if I name every saint. Therefore, I bow down to all of them and pray for their blessings.

32. Now I bow down to Sadashiv, my grandfather of lustrous piety, who stayed for ever at Badrikedar, believing that this worldly life was useless.

33. Next I bow down to my father, who always worshipped Sadashiv, wore the *Rudraksh* necklace around his neck and whose *Ishta Devta* was Shiva.

34. Now I bow down to the one who gave me birth, (i.e. mother), who cared for me and took pains day and night. How many of her obligations can I remember now?.

35. She left me when I was a child and my paternal aunt took the trouble to bring me up with great forbearance. I rest my forehead at her feet, who was all the time engrossed in the remembrance of Hari.

36. I lay down my forehead at the feet of the eldest brother, of matchless brotherly affection, who would have laid down his own life for my sake.

37. Now I bow down to the listeners, and request their concentration. If they are inattentive, how will I get satisfaction?.

38. Whenever the listeners are intelligent and appreciative and are eager to listen to the narration then, by and by, the narrator becomes more and more enthusiastic.

39. If you are inattentive then what is the purpose of this narration?

Therefore, I prostrate myself and beg of you to listen with a joyful heart.

40. I have no knowledge of the etymology nor am I well versed in the scriptures; neither have I heard various holy tales. You are fully aware of all this.

41. I know my own shortcomings and I know my unworthiness. Yet to fulfil my promise to the Guru, I am making these efforts to write the book.

42. My conscience tells me I am like a blade of grass before you. But please accept me as your own by being merciful to me.

43. Now I recall the *Sadguru*, bow down to his feet with love, and surrender my body, speech and mind to him who is the giver of wisdom and inspiration.

44. Just as when we sit for meals, the sweet dish is served at the end, in the same way I make obeisance to the Guru as a sweet ending to my prostrations.

45. *'Aum'*! Obeisance to you *Sadgururaya*, abode of rest for both the movable and the immovable. You, the dwelling place of the whole world, are the compassionate one.

46. The earth, the seven islands[35], nine continents[36], the seven heavens[37] and the nether world are all born out of the *Hiranyagarbha* – that itself is the famous *Brahmand*.

47. The *Sadguru* dwells far beyond what is known as the *Maya*, which that *Brahmand* creates here and which is invisible or illusory.

48. The *Vedas* have been unable to describe his greatness and are therefore silent. The devices and niceties of evidence fail.

49. Whenever I use any metaphors to compare you, you have those very attributes. Whatever the eyes see, is all that you have created yourself.

50. Sree Sainatha is such – the Compassionate and Powerful *Sadguru*, who can be known by the Inner Self. All-transcendent, eternal one, to you, I bow.

51. Obeisance to you, the best of all, ever blissful, fully contented, self-effulgent, abode of auspiciousness, self-realised, teacher of teachers.

52. The *Vedas* and *Srutis* remain silent in their effort to praise you. Whence can I have the intelligence to try and praise you or understand you?.

53. Hail! Hail! *Sadguru*, Treasury of Mercy. Hail! Hail! Dweller on the banks of the River Godavari. Hail! Hail! Brahma, Shankar and Vishnu, Incarnation of Dutta. I bow to you.

54. Brahma's *Brahmanand* cannot exist without the *Sadguru*. I offer[38] my five *Pranas*[39] to you and with total dedication surrender to you for protection.

55. I bow my head in obeisance, press his feet with my hands, gaze at his face, and inhale the sacred water which washes his feet.

56. Keep listening to the praises of Sai; enshrine His image in the mind and incessantly meditate on Sai. This will break your bonds with worldly life.

57. Offer body, mind and wealth[40] completely at the feet of the *Sadguru*. Spend the entire life serving the Guru.

58. The name of the Guru and the intimate association with the Guru, the grace of the Guru and the milk-like sacred water which has washed his feet; the sacred *mantra* from the Guru and residence in his household – these could be obtained with great efforts.

59. The tremendous power in him, after he has tested the devotee, will take his devotee to the threshold of *moksha*[41] without him being conscious of it.

60. The association with the Guru is like the sacred Ganges water which cleanses and makes one pure. It also stabilises the mind on God, which otherwise is fickle.

61. Our *Vedas, Shastras* and *Puranas* are the service to the Guru. Our *Yoga*, sacrifice and penance take us towards the feet of the Guru and are our means of deliverance.

62. Our *Vedas* and *Shastras* are none else than the pious name of *Sree Sadguru*. Our *mantra* is *Sai Samartha*. That is also our mystical contrivance and mystical worship.

63. That '*Brahma* is real' is experienced everyday. That 'the world is an illusion' is a daily awareness. Sai grants this state of heavenly bliss to his devotees.

64. The joy of the Supreme Soul and its realisation, the condition of identity with *Brahmanand* – all that is tangled verbiage. What is required is the condition of permanent bliss.

65. Whosoever has imbibed this state of mind and continues to remain in the same condition, and has peace and contentment– that state itself is self-realisation.

66. Sai is the mine of blissfulness. A fortunate devotee has no dearth of the supreme bliss. Such a devotee is fulfilled like the ocean.

67. *Shiva* and *Shakti*[42], *Purusha* and *Prakruti*[43], the vital airs and their motion, the lamp and its lustre – to perceive duality in these is to distort

the nature of the Pure *Brahman*. They are the same.

68. The *Vedic* saying is '*Brahman* does not delight in being alone' and 'desires to be manifold'. Thus is born duality and is again enjoined in unity.

69. In the state of Pure *Brahman*, there is neither the Supreme Soul nor Nature. Where the sun abides, how can there be day and night?

70. The Real Being is beyond and without any attributes; but for the sake of His devotees He assumes a form. That is Sai, the Pure. I completely surrender to him.

71. For those who surrender to Sai *Samartha*, He has avoided many calamities of theirs. Therefore, for my own selfish purpose, I bow at his feet.

72. From the point of view of reality, he is absolutely different. To give the pleasure of devotion, he takes different forms and performs the *leelas*[44] for his devotees. To him, the lovable one, I bow down.

73. He who is the Cosmic Consciousness in all beings and who is the seat of Self Awareness and has assumed the form of gross consciousness – to him, the lovable one, I bow down.

74. You are my last resort; you are my refuge; you fulfil the devotion of the devotee. O, *Gururaya*, you are Bliss Incarnate.

75. Now at the end of my obeisances, I bow down to all beings, as God is present in all beings. Accept me in your fold.

76. Obeisance to all living beings, so that the Lord of the Universe may be pleased. God is all pervading, integrated and without distinction.

77. Thus I end all my obeisances, which will become the means to complete what I have begun. They are the auspicious beginnings of this book. Now I will narrate the purpose of this opus.

78. Since the time when Sai has graced me and favoured me, I think of him only day and night. He has destroyed my fear of worldly existence and the fear of the cycle of birth and death.

79. Not for me the repetition of any other prayers; not for me any other penance. I behold only one form – the Pure Form of Sai.

80. As soon as one gazes upon Sai's face, thirst and hunger are forgotten. What is the value of other pleasures? One forgets the worldly sorrows.

81. As one looks at Baba's eyes, one forgets one's self. Waves of love swell from within and the whole world is drowned in the raptures of devotion.

82. Action, religion, scriptures, *puranas*, *yoga*, sacrifices, performance

of prescribed religious ceremonies, pilgrimage to holy places and acts of penance – all these are at Sai's feet for me.

83. Continuous observance of the teachings of the Guru, and firm adherence to them brings unshakable faith and unwavering stability.

84. It is due to the outcome of my past deeds that my attachment to Sai has increased and I began to experience his inconceivable power. How can I adequately describe it?.

85. That power which creates devotion and attachment to Sai's feet, also leads to detachment while participating in worldly life and gives great bliss.

86. Different ways of devotion have been described by various people. I will speak briefly of its nature and characteristics during the course of the narration according to my aptitude.

87. To realise the harmonious connection with the Inner Self is the foremost form of devotion, say those who are learned in the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*, and the knowledgeable spiritual guides.

88. *Puja* and *Archana* for the love of God are the ways to express devotion, as preached by Parashar[45] and Vyasa[46]. That is also another form of worship.

89. For the sake of the Guru, collect flowers such as the *Parijat* and others, from the garden, sweep the courtyard of the Guru's abode and sprinkle water and smear it with the wash of cowdung.

90. At the outset, bathe and chant the morning mantras; make fragrant paste and annoint the *Gurudev* with sandalwood, bathe him with the five nectarial substances (milk, honey, *ghee*, curd and sugar), burn incense and light the lamp.

91. Afterwards offer *naivedya*[47], then do *arati* with the lamp and the incense. In this way, doing all the services with love, is called *archana* (worship).

92. Begin the worship by making your heart and intelligence pure and sinless, having an unsullied disposition and invoke the power of the deity within yourself.

93. Then recall that divine feeling after the '*archana*' is concluded, and in your heart restore the former state[48] and establish it firmly within you.

94. Now there are other modes of devotion. In the opinion of Gargacharya[49], when the mind is completely absorbed singing the praises of God, it becomes one with him (a mode of worship).

95. Continuously being aware of one's Real Self, relating religious tales and songs, having disciplined bahaviour, is another form of *Bhakti* as described by Shandilya[50].

96. Those who know what is good for themselves, follow the *Vedas* and act as prescribed by them; avoid prohibited and improper conduct and all things which are obstacles for one's own good.

97. I am not the doer of any action nor the enjoyer of its fruits? When I feel this, this is an action which is devoid of ego and is the surrender to the Supreme Being for union with it.

98. Perform all your actions in this way. Then, naturally a stage is reached when you become a non-doer. Though it is not possible ever to disown *Karma*, yet it is possible to disown the fruit of the *Karma*.

99. Remove a thorn with the help of a thorn. To become a non-doer, you have to act according to the Karmas. When realisation takes place, then only the Karma will end.

100. Completely stopping the desire for the fruits of action is the best way for foregoing the desires. Perform your daily routines and specially prescribed duties. This is called the law of conduct.

101. Offer all your actions to God and be sorry for missing the remembrance of God for even one moment. This is 'Naradiya *Bhakti*', which is different from other ways of devotion.

102. There are many such ways of devotion, each more extraordinary than the other. We will cross the ocean of life untouched by its waters merely by remembering the deeds of the Guru.

103. I developed a passion for listening to the stories of the Guru and was captivated by them. I felt that I too should write about him from my experiences.

104. Once, later on, when I was at Shirdi, and I had gone to the *Masjid* for his *darshan*, I saw Baba grinding wheat which surprised me greatly.

105. At first I will tell you that story. Listen to it with a quiet mind. From that instance was born the whole idea of this *Satcharita*.

106. 'The best *shlokas* are those which speak of God's glory'. A narration of the good works (of Sai), conversing about his all-embracing love will purify the mind and the intellect will be clear.

107. All the three-fold afflictions[51] will be averted if you listen to his life and '*leelas*' and you will have satisfaction.

108. Those who are distressed by the three-fold afflictions and those who are inclined towards the attainment of salvation, seek refuge at his feet with pleasure and are then enriched by spiritual experiences.

109. Now give me your attention. Listen to the charming account by which

you will be greatly surprised to hear about the kindness of Baba.

110. You know, one morning, after Baba cleaned his teeth and washed his face, he began preparations for grinding.

111. He took in his hand a scuttle-basket[52], went near the sack full of wheat where it was stored and heaped one measure after another of the wheat into the basket.

112. He then spread out a spare sack, placed the grinding stone on it, hammered the peg firmly into it, so that it may not come off while grinding.

113. After rolling up his sleeves and gathering up the loose folds of his *kafni* [53], he sat down near the grinding stone and spread out his legs.

Grinding Stone - Quern

114. I was greatly surprised and questioned the purpose of this grinding by one who had no possessions nor any wherewithals. Why should he think of doing this?

115. May that be whatsoever. Holding the peg in his hand, with his head bent down, Baba with his own hands started turning the grinding stone and unhesitatingly turned out the flour, as if crushing the inimical forces.

116. Many a saint I have seen but none who was a grinder! He alone knew the pleasure and novelty derived from grinding wheat.

117. The onlookers were filled with awe but nobody dared to ask him what he was doing. No sooner than the news spread in the village that men and women actually came running.

118. All the women who came running were tired. Four of the women climbed the steps of the *Masjid* hurriedly and forcibly took away the peg from Baba's hands.

119. Baba became furious with them but they started grinding the wheat at once; and while grinding sang songs praising him and his *leelas*.

120. Seeing the love of the women, his pretended anger cooled down. Anger turned into love and Baba started smiling.

121. Four *seers* [54] of wheat were ground and the basket was empty. Then the fancies of the women began to dance uncontrollably.

122. "Baba does not make *chappatis* [55]. He goes about as a mendicant. What will he do with the wheat flour?". The women conjectured.

123. "Baba has neither wife nor child. Baba is all alone. He has no household or family. Why so much flour?".

124. One of them said : "Baba is exceedingly kind. This *leela* is only for our love's sake. Right now he will distribute this flour entirely to all of us".

125. "Now he will divide it into four parts – one for each of us". All of them were building such castles in the air.

126. Baba's sport he alone knows. No one can gauge the extent of it. But the women's greed to loot Baba arose.

127. The flour was spread out and the wheat was used up. The grinding stone was placed against the wall. The flour was filled into the scuttle-basket by the women, with intent to carry it to their respective homes.

128. Till then Baba did not utter a single word. When the four of them divided the flour into four parts, then, folks, listen to what he said:

129. "You are mad with greed! What are you taking and where? Do you think it belongs to your father? Now go to the boundary of the village and throw away the flour there.

130. "You good-for-nothings have come running to loot me. Did you give the wheat on loan that you want to take away the flour?".

131. The women moaned and fretted amongst themselves quite a lot; felt disgraced because of their greed; began to whisper amongst themselves and hurried immediately to the village boundary.

132. Nobody can guess the motives of Baba, because at the start no one knows what is to follow. But with patience, the result is known. Baba's marvels are distinctive.

133. Later on, I asked the people why Baba had acted thus; and they said that this is the manner in which he had averted the spread of the disease.

134. It was not the wheat but it was the cholera that he ground out in the grinding stone; and, afterwards, that was thrown out at the village boundary by handsful.

135. The flour was thrown on the banks of the stream. Since that time the disease receded. Promptly the bad days passed away. This was the expertise of Baba.

136. The village was affected by the epidemic of cholera for which Sainath had found this remedy. The disease was totally eradicated and peace was restored in the village.

137. Seeing this spectacle of grinding, I was taken aback. How can the cause and effect be related? How can the proof be found?

138. What could be the connection between wheat and disease? Having seen this inconceivable incident, I thought of writing this book.

139. Like the waves of the sea, love upsurged within me and I felt like singing the sweet tale of Baba to my heart's content.

Govind R. Dabholkar
alias Hemadpant

140. Hemad surrenders to Sainath. The auspicious invocation ends here with obeisance to relations, friends and saints. Obeisance for ever to the *Sadguru*.

141. In the next chapter I will speak about the purpose of the book; and give an insight into the capacity and the commitment to the best of my ability. The listeners should listen to it with concentration.

142. Likewise, the listeners and the writer will be benefitted by this *Sree Sai Satcharita*. Who is this writer Hemadpant will become clear later on.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the first chapter named "The Invocation" of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, composed by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by the Saints and the virtuous people.

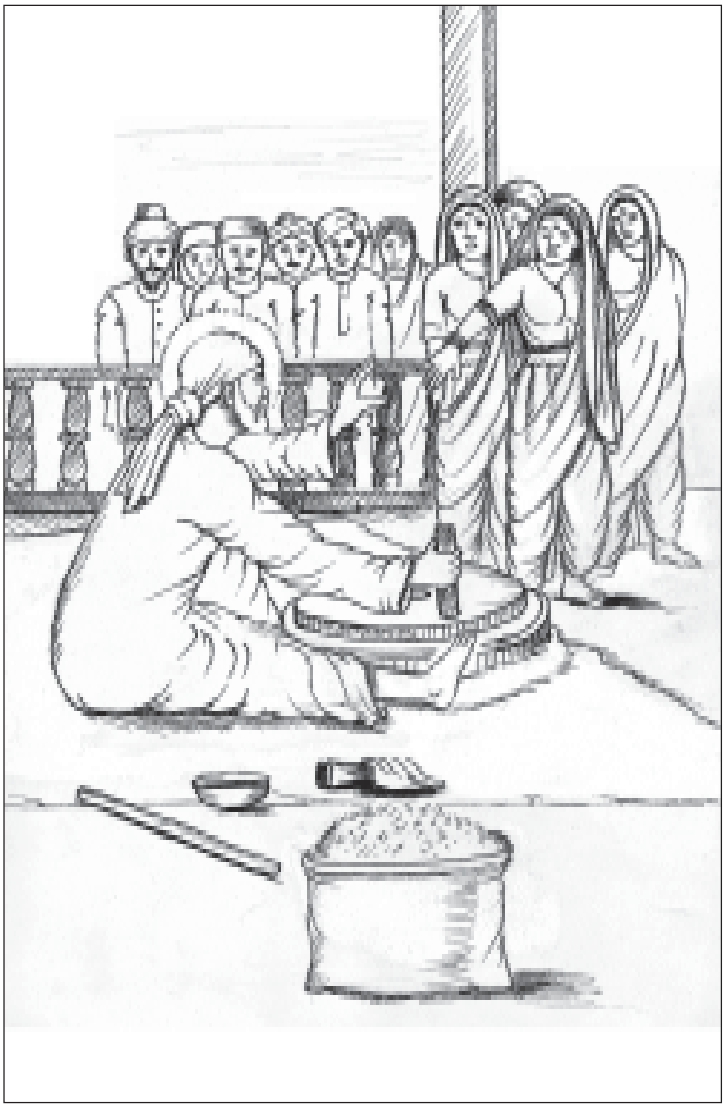
This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Beloved or tutelar.
2. Six miscellaneous *Vedas* (inclusive of two which are lost), Code of moral conduct, *Puranas*, *Mimansa*, Commentaries etc.
3. *Bhulok* i.e. earth; *Bhuvarlok* i.e. region between the sun and the earth; *Swarlok* i.e. between Sun, Polar Star; *Mahalok* i.e. sphere of sun and luminaries; *Tapolok* i.e. heaven of the *tapasvis* ; *Janalok* i.e. abode of sons of Brahma; *Satyalok* heaven of Brahma and *Rishis*; and *Saptapatals* i.e. seven hells, known as *Atal*, *Vittal*, *Muttal*, *Talatal*, *Mahatal*, *Rasatal* and *Patal*.
4. With all the eight limbs of the body touching the ground indicating perfect surrender.
5. Riddhi and Siddhi – names of two female attendants of Ganesh, who confer psychic and spiritual powers.
6. Parvati, consort of Shiva.
7. He is Parashuram, a celebrated hero and demi-god; one of the incarnations of Vishnu.
8. Vehicle of Saraswati.
9. The Indian lute.
10. Passion, Goodness, and Darkness, the three attributes of matter and nature.
11. Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar.
12. The first Lord, the mover on the Waters of Space – a title of Vishnu, in His aspect as the Holy Spirit.
13. He threw the axe from Veraval (in Saurashtra) in the direction of Kanya Kumari (tip of India's land mass) claiming the land for Brahmins.
14. Lineage.
15. Author of the *Shukla Yajur Veda,* and one of the Gurus of Janak Raja, foster father of Sita.
16. He is called "the son of Manu" – one of the seven progenitors of mankind.
17. The narrator of *Vishnu Puran*.

18. Son of Brahma.
19. Four sons of Brahmadev who were created instead of being born.
20. Celebrated sage, who was originally a *Kshatriya*. He was a companion and counsellor of young Ram.
21. One of the ancient seven great *Rishis* ; the Guru of the solar race, including Ram.
22. Author of Ramayan.
23. He got *Brahma Gñyan* in his mother's womb.
24. Founder of *Mimansa* school of Philosophy.
25. Uncle of Yagñavalkya, author of *Rig veda.*
26. The nine yogis are probably the same as the *Nav Nathas – Macchindra, Goraksha, Jalandar, Kanifa, Charapati, Nagesha, Bharat, Revana* and *Gahini*.
27. Follower of the *Nav Nathas* and *Dñyaneshwar*'s elder brother and Guru.
28. Born at Alandi in the 13th Century, famous for his *Dñyaneshwari* and *Abhangas*. Took *samadhi* at twenty-one years of age at Alandi.
29. Dñyaneshwar's sister and also a great saint.
30. Dñyaneshwar's younger brother.
31. Born in Paithan, in the 16th Century and took *samadhi* there. He wrote books and *abhangas*. Dutta Guru is said to have given him darshan.
32. Staunch devotee of Pandurang – always lived in Dehu but did his writings in Alandi.
33. Beautiful girl who was a devout bhakta of Pandharpur.
34. Goldsmith, also of Pandharpur, but a devotee of Shankar who by Vitthal's grace had visions of Shankar in Vitthal and Vitthal bore the lingam on his head for Narhari.
35. *Jambu, Kusha, Plaksha, Shalmali, Craunch, Shaka, Pushkar.*
36. *Ilavrutta, Bhatrashva, Harivarsha, Kimpurushavarga, Ketumala, Ramayaka, Bharatvarsha, Hiranya, Uttarkuru.*
37. See note no. 3.
38. Literally, wave my five *Pranas* like an *arati.*
39. The five *Pranas* are *prana*, *apana*, *samana, udana, vyana.*
40. This is an expression which means total surrender, even of ego.
41. Salvation.
42. Supreme Spirit and Divine Energy.
43. Supreme Soul and Nature.
44. Divine Sport.
45. Father of Vyas.
46. Compiler and arranger of *Vedas.*
47. Offering of food, such as milk, fruits, honey etc.
48. State of purity and sinlessness.
49. Author of science and astrology.
50. Author of law book.
51. Afflictions which are physical, mental and spiritual.
52. Winnowing fan for sifting grains.
53. Long toga-like robe.
54. A measure of weight.
55. Unleavened flat circular bread of wheat flour, millet etc.



Baba grinding wheat to ward off cholera.

What could be the connection between wheat and disease? Having seen this inconceivable incident, Hemadpant thought of writing *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita* (Ch. 1, ovi 138)

2

The Purpose of the Narration relating to the recounting of the Naming Ceremony

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. In the previous chapter the invocation was completed with obeisance to the deities, elders in the family and the Guru. Having sown the seeds of the Sai *Satcharita*, let us commence upon the objective of this undertaking.
2. We will clearly state the qualification and commitment of the author in a very condensed form, so that the listeners would get an insight into the book without any effort.
3. In the first chapter, the sequence of the grinding of the wheat, and the suppression of the cholera to the great surprise of the villagers, was related.
4. Such are Sai's indescribable *leelas*, which gave me a delight to listen. That delight has burst forth from me in a flood of love, in the form of this poetical composition.
5. Hence my gratitude to Sai. I thought of recounting, to the best of my capacity, the experiences which would be instructive to the devotees and will also expiate their sins.
6. For this purpose I have written, with reverence and piety, this series of stories of Sai, which will bring happiness, in this world and in life hereafter.
7. The life of a saint shows the path to righteousness. It is neither a treatise on logic nor law. If one has been blessed to receive the grace of the saint, he finds nothing strange.
8. Therefore, I pray to the listeners to share this joy. Blessed is the fortunate person who is in good company and who devotedly engages in the diligent study of the stories of the lives of the saints.

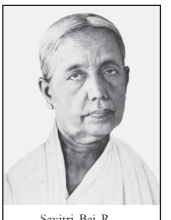
9. I am unable to write the biography of an intimate friend of long standing, with whom I associate day and night. Then, how can I write the biography of a saint?
10. When I am unable to know my own nature completely, how then can I faultlessly describe the thoughts of a saint?
11. When the four *Vedas* are silent in describing the Inner Self, then how can I understand the true nature of Your Self?
12. One should become a saint oneself, then try to truly understand the saints. So I already know my limitations in describing the saints.
13. The waters of the Seven Seas[1], those can be measured; the skies can be covered; but there is no mirror to reflect a saint.
14. I know that I am an insignificant person; but, when I realise Baba's tremendous powers, there arise uncontrollable emotional ripples of song.
15. Hail! Hail! *Sairaya*! The refuge of the weak and the destitute! Infinite is your love and indescribable. Have mercy on me, your servant.
16. With limited capacities, I am undertaking this venture of writing this account. Do not let me be ridiculed.
17. Maharaj Dñyaneshwar says that whosoever writes biographies of saints are blessed by God. Then, why should I be afraid?
18. This inspiration to write was kindled by God Himself, although I am dense and dull-witted. He knows how best His own work can be completed.
19. Whatever services devotees think of rendering to saints, it is the saints themselves who get it done. The devotees are merely the ordained instruments. The real inspiration comes from the saints.
20. Essentially, it is Sai himself who is making me, an ignorant person, to write his own life story. Therein lies the greatness of this book, which evokes reverence and respect.
21. Ascetics, saints or God, can get their story written by anyone they chose, by conferring grace upon them;
22. just as in the seventeen hundred *Shake* [2], the saints inspired a person named Mahipati, to render service to them and got their life stories written by him.
23. Likewise, in the year eighteen hundred *Shake* [3], the services of Das Ganu were availed by saints by getting him to write the following biographies, which purified everybody.
24. Just as Mahipati[4] has written four volumes named (a) 'Bhakta Vijaya'

(b) 'Sant Vijaya' (c) 'Bhakta Leelamrut' and (d) 'Sant Leelamrut', so Das Ganu has written two such volumes.

25. One of the books was 'Bhakta Leelamrut' and the other one was 'Sant Kathamrut'. In both these volumes he has described the modern-day devotees and saints to the extent of information available.

26. The nectar-like story of Sree Sai, is narrated in the three chapters of 'Bhakta Leelamrut'. Readers should read it from there.

27. Similarly, in the fifty-seventh chapter of the 'Sant Kathamrut', there is an instructive story told by Sai to a devotee which should also be read.


Savitri Bai R. Tendulkar

28. Besides, the *leelas* of Sai are to be found in Raghunath and Savitri's 'Bhajanmala' from their own experiences. I can tell you that it will soothe the people to sing the *abhangs* and the *padas* [5].

29. To the 'Bhajanmala', a child of Baba, Hari Sitaram Dixit has lovingly contributed a preface in which he has showered the nectarlike tale of Sai's life, which is like a cloud-fall of water for the thirsty Chakor [6] birds. Listeners should also partake of it reverentially.

30. Even the miscellaneous poems of Das Ganu are also full of feeling and will please the hearts of the listeners, while reading the *leelas* of Baba.

31. Likewise, for the Gujarati devotees, a devotee called Amidas Bhavanidas Mehta has very lovingly written some tales of the miracles.

32. Besides, some eminent devotees have published from the city of Pune, a series of tales of Baba, under the title 'Sai Prabha'.

33. If such tales exist, then what is the need of this book? A doubt may arise in the minds of the listeners, so please listen to this explanation.

34. The life story of Sai is like a vast ocean – endless, inexhaustible, full of jewels. I am just a lapwing[7], how can I empty the ocean? How can it ever happen?

35. Similarly, the life of Sai is profound. It is impossible to describe it fully. Therefore, I will do as much as possible, and please be content with that.

36. The inexhaustible and unexcelled stories of Sai give peace to those who are so deeply involved in their worldly affairs. The listeners will rejoice by listening to them and his own devotees will have quietude of mind.

37. Baba told stories of various kinds containing worldly advice in respect of common experiences and secret foibles of their own deeds[8].

38. Well-known are the divine *Vedas*. From these innumerable legends are renowned. Similarly, Baba told innumerable stories which are sweet and meaningful.

39. Listening to them attentively, other pleasures become trivial[9]. Hunger and thirst are forgotten and there is deep contentment within.

40. Some seek absorption into the essence of *Brahman* ; some seek proficiency in the eight branches of *Yoga* [10]; some the fulness of the rapture of *Samadhi* – all these can be experienced by listening to the stories.

41. The chains of bondage due to *karma* [11] will be completely severed; the mind illumined and bliss experienced by all the listeners of this story.

42. Therefore, I got this intense desire and inspiration to string together this garland of tales worthy of collection, believing it to be the best worship.

43. By only a few words falling on the ears, misfortunes of a lifetime will pass away. The one who has faith will be able to cross the worldly ocean by listening to the whole story with respect.

44. He will make me his pen by holding my hand and making me write. I am taking the credit for name's sake, but I'll be just the instrument for his writing.

45. Year after year, after seeing Baba's *leelas*, it became my preoccupation to collect the tales of Baba for his simple and loving devotees.

46. Those who had seen Baba, but whose eyes were not satiated, for them, listening to the glories of Baba would be a purification and meritorious.

47. Whoever is fortunate to have the desire to read (this book), he will have happiness, bliss and contentment.

48. When these thoughts crossed my mind, I told Madhavrao[12] about them. But I was very doubtful how I could achieve this.

49. As I am past sixty, wisdom has fled helter-skelter; and, also, due to my physical debility, my efforts may end up like an old man's prattle.

50. Let my prattling be for the love of Sai. I shall be able to obtain deliverance. Elsewhere, it will be useless. Hence this effort of mine.

51. Having received experiences day and night, I took a decision to write the account, a study of which will set the mind at peace and rest.

52. I thought of presenting to the listeners the self-contained, and without affectation, repeated utterances of Baba, based on his Self-Realisation.

53. Baba told many parables; set many on the path of devotion. All that should be collected; and this collection would be Sai's religious verses.

54. All those who tell these stories and those who listen reverentially, both are benefitted with eternal peace and rest.

55. Listening to the stories told by Baba, they will forget their bodily ailments. And if they concentrate and dwell upon them, liberation from bondage will follow naturally.

56. Stories from Sree Sai's own mouth abound more in sweetness than nectar. Listening to them overwhelmed the listeners with heavenly bliss. How can I describe their sweetness?

57. I feel that I would be able to attain *Moksha* [13] if I roll in the dust of the feet of anyone, whom I find singing and praising these tales unpretentiously.

58. The unique presentation of his stories, as also the apt choice of words, would completely absorb the listeners in him and all would experience perfect bliss.

59. Just as the ears are keen to listen to the stories, or the eyes are ready to get a *darshan* [14], similarly the mind should be eager to concentrate and get easily absorbed in divine contemplation.

60. Guru-mauli [15] is my mother and the stories about her which are passed on, by word of mouth, should be stored in our hearts reverentially.

61. We will recall the same stories, over and over again, assimilate whatever we can, weave them together with bonds of love and later share them between us.

62. In this (book), I have written nothing on my own. It is all Sainath's inspiration. Whatever he wants me to say, he ensures that I speak.

63. To say 'I speak' is egotism. Sai himself is the puppeteer who holds me by his strings. It is he who speaks through me. Who am I to say then, that I speak?

64. When the ego is completely surrendered at his feet, infinite bliss will ensue. The whole of worldly existence will be blissful when egotism vanishes.

65. When this thought arose, I did not have the opportunity nor the courage to ask Baba about it. As Madhavrao came up the steps (of the *Masjid*), I told it to him.

66. At that very time, seeing no one around, Madhavrao took the opportunity to ask Baba.

Madhavrao Deshpande alias Shyama

67. "Baba, this Annasaheb says that he has in mind to write your biography, according to his ability, provided he has your consent".

68. "I am just a fakir, wandering from door to door for alms, eating *bhakri* [16] with or without vegetables, and passing my days. Then why should there be my biography?

69. It will invoke ridicule". "Do not speak like this about this jewel. It must be put in a setting befitting it.

70. "May it be howsoever. Your permission is important. He will write if you give him your co-operation. Or your grace will write it through him, vanquishing all evil forces.

71. "Only with the blessings of saints can the composition of a book begin. Without your grace the writing will not progress smoothly".

72. Knowing my innermost wish, compassion arose in Sai *Samartha* and he said: "His wish will be fulfilled". And I placed my head at his feet.

73. Sai who is an expert in all the systems of divine faith and worship, and the one who is the saviour of all his devotees, gave me the *prasad* of *udi* [17] and placed his boon giving hand on my head.

74. After hearing Madhavrao's request, Sai took pity on me and purified my restless mind and gave me courage.

75. After knowing my desire, he gave me his permission to go ahead and said: "Make a good collection of stories, episodes and experiences.

76. "It is better that you maintain records. You have my whole hearted support. The writer is a mere instrument. I have to write it myself.

77. "My story I shall write myself. I should fulfil the devotees' wishes myself. Thus I will wipe out your egotism and place it at my feet.

78. "The one who behaves like this in life, to him I will give complete help; not only for the writing of the story but I shall reside in his home and serve him.

79. "When the ego diminishes and finally disappears, then I will dwell in him and I will write with my own hands."

80. The undertaking begun with this conviction or any listening, thinking or writing so done is accomplished by Him, but the writer is only the instrument.

81. "Certainly keep the records wherever you may be, either at home or outside. Try to remember them, on and oft. You will have quietude.

82. "If you listen to my stories, recite them and meditate upon them, devotion for me will arise and ignorance will be completely destroyed.

83. "Whenever there is devotion, full of faith, I am entirely in its power always. Have no doubts about this. Otherwise I am unattainable.

84. "If the listeners listen to these stories with faith, then greater faith will be kindled and they will easily experience heavenly bliss and will acquire a state of happiness.

85. "The devotees shall get self realisation. The soul will be in tune with *Brahman*. The inconceivable and the formless will be understood by them and the Life Spirit will manifest."

86. "Such is the aim of my stories. What else can one desire? This is also the goal of the *Vedas*. The devotees will be enriched because of this.

87. "Wherever there is the mentality of contentiousness, ignorance and illusion will exist in abundance. There is no purification nor one's own benefit. There are always sceptical and ignoble thoughts.

88. "Such a person is not fit for self-knowledge. False knowledge will overpower him. For him there is nothing in this world and in the next. For ever and everywhere, he is miserable.

89. "There is no point in establishing one's own school of thought. And there is no need to refute the thinking of others also. There is no need to debate and prove someone wrong. These are baseless efforts".

90. "There is no need to refute the thinking of others also". That sentence makes me recollect the promise I had given to the listeners earlier.

91. Before the end of the first chapter, I had promised all the listeners to narrate the story of how I was named 'Hemad'. I will tell you this first.

92. This is a digression from the main story. When you listen to it you will judge its relevance. Your curiosity will be satisfied. This is also inspired by Sai.

93. Later on, I will come back to the life story of Sai. Therefore, listeners should listen with rapt attention to the story.

94. Now in this volume of Sai's *leelas*, you will come across, at the end of each chapter, a line that it is "composed by the devotee Hemadpant". Who is this Pant?

95. This will be a natural question that will arise in the minds of the listeners. To quench their curiousity of how I was so named, it is necessary to listen to it with respect.

96. From birth to death there are sixteen purificatory and essential rites[18] prescribed according to the Hindu *dharma*. One of them is the naming rite and this particular rite is well-known.

97. In this connection, follows a short story. Listeners may listen to it with respectful attention. The context of the naming ceremony of Hemadpant will be told presently.

98. This writer has always been mischievious, equally loquacious and similarly ever reviling and vile – undefiled by any education.

99. Not being aware of the powers of the *Sadguru*, the very embodiment of evil mindedness and foolish fancy, always proud of his own wisdom and prone to disputation.

100. But with a powerful destiny, I could reach the lotus feet of Sai. I could see them only because of my destiny. This is without any doubt.

101. If I had no relationship with Kakasaheb[19], the foremost of the devotees and with Nanasaheb Chandorkar [20], arising out of my associations in the past lives, how could I have been to Shirdi?

102. Kakasaheb pressed me and we decided to go to Shirdi. But on the very day of departure, my mind changed suddenly.

103. One of my close friends, who had been favoured by the Guru with a son, was at Lonavala with his wife, when a strange incident occurred.

104. His one and only son, healthy and virtuous, was attacked by high fever, even in that place with salubrious climate.

105. He tried whatever was humanly possible; so also, charms and religious devices for a cure. He brought the Guru and made him sit near the boy. But, inspite of this, his son passed away.

106. Judging the difficult situation, to ward off the dreadful calamity, the Guru was made to sit near the son. But it was all in vain.

107. Such is this strange worldly life! One's son and one's wife are governed by the *karma* of past lives. Destiny is inevitable everywhere, at all times.

108. When I heard the bad news I was greatly depressed. 'Is this the usefulness of the Guru? That he could not protect the only son?'

109. The force of destiny cooled my desire to take the *darshan* of Sai. This came as an obstacle to my departure.

110. 'Why go to Shirdi? What was the condition of my friend? Is this the outcome of being attached to a Guru? What can the Guru do against destiny?

111. If what is destined is bound to happen, then what is the purpose of having a Guru?' Hence, going to Shirdi was cancelled.

112. 'For what reason should one leave one's own home? Why run after a Guru? Why invite hardship and leave home comforts?' Nothing whatsoever is understood by this prattler.

113. 'Whatever presents itself spontaneously, let me endure – whether it be pleasurable or distressful. What is the point in going to the Guru, when what is to happen will happen?'

114. But destiny prevails inspite of a contrary wish. Everything else is powerless before it, and I was dragged to Shirdi.

115. Nanasaheb, who was a district official, started on a tour of Bassein. He came from Thane to Dadar and waited at the station for a while.

116. There was one hour's time for the train for Bassein to arrive. He felt that much of this time could be utilised for some other work.

117. The moment he thought of this, a train arrived going only upto Bandra and he boarded it.

118. When the train arrived at the destination, I got a message and I went to see him immediately. As soon as we met, talk about Shirdi started.

119. "When will you go for Sai *darshan*? Why this lethargy in going to Shirdi? Why are you procrastinating? Why is your mind not calm?"

120. When I saw Nana's earnestness, I felt ashamed. I told him frankly of the waywardness of my mind.

121. Thereafter, Nana's earnest, lovable and pure advice aroused in me the desire to go to Shirdi.

122. Nana left only after taking a promise from me 'to start immediately'. Then I returned and decided to leave on my journey at an auspicious time.

123. I packed my luggage and made all household arrangements. That very day, in the evening, I started for Shirdi.

124. I thought the evening mail train should stop at Dadar. I, therefore, paid the fare and purchased a ticket for Dadar only[21].

125. But no sooner than I boarded the train, and while the train was still at Bandra, a Muslim very agilely came into the compartment as the train started to move.

126. The purchase of a ticket to Dadar had almost become an obstacle at the very beginning of my journey – almost like a fly in the ointment.

127. Seeing all my bag and baggage, the Muslim asked me where I was bound. I told him that I was going to Dadar to catch the mail train to Manmad.

128. Then, timely, he warned me not to get down at Dadar, as the mail train would not stop there. He asked me to proceed to Victoria Terminus.

129. Had I not got this timely suggestion, I would not have caught the mail at Dadar. And I do not know then how my fickle mind would have re-acted.

130. But that day was destined for departure. It was a lucky coincidence that this favourable interlude, which I have related, suddenly took place.

131. I reached Shirdi next morning between nine and ten. There (at Shirdi), Bhausaheb Dixit was waiting for me.

132. This happened in the year nineteen hundred and ten. There was then only Sathe's *wada* [22] for pilgrims to stay.

133. When I alighted from the *tonga* [23], my mind was choked with anxiety for the *darshan*. When would I bow my head at his feet? Waves of joy swelled up in my heart.

134. Just then Tatyasaheb Noolkar [24], a well-known and foremost devotee of Sai returned from the *Masjid* and said, take *darshan* immediately.

135. Baba, with his followers, is just around the corner of the *wada*. Come and let us prostrate at his feet. Then he will go to the Lendi [25].

136. Bathe thereafter. When Baba returns, then you can go to the *Masjid* and take his *darshan* again at leisure."

137. Hearing this, I hurriedly ran to the spot where Baba was and prostrated in the dust at his feet. My joy knew no bounds.

138. What I actually saw far exceeded what Nanasaheb had told me. I considered myself blessed. My eyes were fulfilled.

139. I had never heard of nor seen such a personality. I experienced the

gratification of seeing a much revered person. I lost my hunger and thirst. My senses stood still.

140. By the touch of Sai's feet, I achieved the highest plenitude of my life. A new life began thence.

141. To those, through whom I attained this saintly association, I am entirely and inviolately under their obligation. Every fibre of my being was filled with joy.

142. They are my real kith and kin, because of whom I attained the supreme spiritual riches. Beyond them, there are no closer relations. This is what I believe in my heart of hearts.

143. What a great obligation. I am unable to requite it. Therefore, I fold my hands to them and lay my head at their feet.

144. I got the benefit of Sai's *darshan* and all the doubts in my mind vanished. Moreover, I came in touch with Sai. It was exceeding joy that I experienced.

145. Sai *darshan* is an exceptional experience. The whole nature changes with it. The memories of past deeds disappear and slowly a dislike develops for worldly pleasures.

146. The sins accumulated from many past lives were destroyed by the benevolent glance. Hope awakened of unending joy being received at Sai's feet.

147. By my good fortune I reached Sai's feet, which are as holy as the Lake Manas[26], which will transform a crow like me into a swan. Sai is a great *Mahant*, foremost amongst saints, ascetic of highest order and a great *yogi*.

148. He is the destroyer of sins, difficulties and miseries. By the *darshan* of such a person as Sai, I am greatly blessed by coming into contact with the treasure-house of virtue.

149. My meeting with Sai Maharaj is the outcome of the good deeds of all my previous births. If the eyes are filled with the form of Sai, then the whole world takes the form of Sai.

150. On the first day of my arrival at Shirdi, I had an argument with Balasaheb Bhate[27] on the necessity of having a Guru.

151. "By giving up one's own independence, why should one rely upon someone else! What is the need of a Guru where there is competence in performing one's duties?

152. "For one should do one's own duties. What can a Guru do for him who does not act? To one who is supine and lazy, who can give him anything?"

153. Just this was my simple proposition. The other side had the opposite view point. Obstinacy on both sides was equally balanced. And the controversy continued.

154. The source of all controversy is strong self-conceit. This is a sign of egotism without which there cannot be any such arguments in the world.

155. The argument of the opposite side was that even if a person is learned and well-versed in the *Vedas*, without the grace of the Guru, such a person will be only academically free of bonds.

156. Is destiny more important or one's own efforts? A fierce dispute raged; and I said, "What will you achieve by entirely depending upon your destiny?"

157. Then the opponent said, "Destiny is irresistible. The future cannot be averted. Even the most confident become helpless.

158. "Who can defy destiny? You may try doing something and it may take quite a different turn. Keep your word jugglery to yourself. Your ego should be discarded".

159. I said, "How do you say so? One who makes efforts receives everything. How can destiny help an idler?

160. "One should raise himself by one's own efforts, proclaim the *Smritis*. One cannot go further by disregarding this.

161. "Whatever one has to do one should do himself. Why should one follow a Guru? If one is not alert, just a Guru is not enough.

162. "How will the Guru give success to the ill-natured person, who casts away his discrimination between right and wrong, and the means of self-purification?"

163. There was no end to this argument. There was no outcome. My only achievement was losing my peace of mind.

164. Thus the arguments went on. No one was tired even for a moment. Fifty minutes (approximately) passed this way and finally a stop was put to it.

165. No sooner than we arrived at the *Masjid* along with some people, listen to what Baba was asking Kakasaheb!

166. "What was going on in the *wada* ? What was the controversy? What did this Hemadpant say?" He said, looking at me.

167. There was considerable distance between the *wada* and the *Masjid*. How did Baba come to know about this? I was greatly surprised.

168. Whatsoever that may be! I was hit by the dart of Baba's words and I

was ashamed and speechless, that this improper thing had happened right at this first meeting.

Govind R.Dabholkar
alias Hemadpant

169. The controversy in the morning was the cause for Baba naming me 'Hemadpant'. I made a mental note that he must have remembered Hemad because of it.

170. The Yadav Kings of Devgiri were known as the Jadhavs of Daulatabad. In the thirteenth century, the splendour of their kingdom increased the glory of Maharashtra.

171. The King Mahadev was dignified and majestic – an emperor[28]. His nephew was also renowned for meritorious works and became famous because of his valour.

172. He was 'Ramraja', a crest jewel of the Yadav dynasty and the foremost of kings. Hemadri was the Minister for both of them, endowed with many good qualities and was a man of many accomplishments.

173. Hemadri had to his credit a treatise on *Dharmashastra*. He was philanthropic towards the Brahmins[29]. He was the first composer of a consistent religious code of conduct.

174. Hemadri also composed 'Chaturvarga Chintamani[30]' a famous book which was a mine of information on self-imposed religious observances, charity, holy pilgrimages and salvation.

175. The Sanskrit name 'Hemadripant' became in the Prakrit [31] Hemadpant. He was very famous in those days as a diplomat and an expert in administration.

176. His lineage was from the sage named 'Vatsa' and mine from 'Bhardvaj'. His lineage had five exalted persons while mine has three. He was a *Yajurvedi* while I was a *Rigvedi*. And he had studied the science of *Dharmashastra* while I was an ignoramus.

177. He was a *Madhyandin* [32], I am *Shakal* [32]. He was learned, I a prattler. He was a scholar, I naive. Why this inept title for me?

178. He was an expert politician and a statesman and I was a dull-head. His Sanskrit book 'Rajyaprashasti' was famous and I was unable to compose even a single verse.

179. He was an author and well-versed in fine arts. I was unlettered and ignorant. He was wise and an authority in *Dharmashastra*. I was unwise.

180. His book 'Lekhankalpataru'[33] was a mine of many and various poems. I was just an innocent child of Baba, not able to compose a single verse in 'ovi' metre.

181. Gora, Chokha, Savtamali, Nivritti, Dñyanoba, Nama[34] and others who spread the *Bhagvat Dharma* rose to eminence during this period.

182. In the assembly of learned people, Hemadpant the administrator took his place by the side of Pandit Bopedeo, who shone like a jewel amongst accomplished people.

183. Thereafter, from the north, Muslim armies descended. And the Muslim rule pervaded everywhere, ending the rule of the Deccan.

184. It was not for my intelligence that the title was bestowed upon me, but for my arguments and prattling. This dart was spent to destroy my ego.

185. I was puffed up with inadequate knowledge[35], and without possessing due qualifications I was talking. He opened my eyes to my faults by the timely collyrium of admonition.

186. Thus, this is the original background of my unusual name which came from Sai's mouth. This significant naming ceremony was opportune and timely; and I considered it as a honour.

187. From this I should learn a lesson that fruitless arguments are a bad sign. Let me never indulge in them because they are extremely harmful.

188. The title was given to me for the very reason that my ego should vanish; and, by which, I would bear in mind, till my death, that one should remain humble always.

189. Ram, son of Dashrath, God Incarnate, Ominscient, Saviour of the Universe, who dwelt in the minds of all the sages, used to fall at the feet of Vashishtha[36].

190. Krishna, incarnation of the supreme Brahman, also had to resort to a Guru. At Sandipani's house he gathered wood and served him, undergoing hardships.

191. What am I compared to them? Why should I enter into arguments? There is no knowledge or heavenly bliss without the Guru. This is also confirmed by the *Shastras*.

192. Fruitless arguments are not good. Nor should we be competitive. Without faith and patience, salvation is unattainable even in a slight measure.

193. I had experience of this, later on. In this way I, accepted with grace this title, which was given to me with love and blessings.

194. Now let us end this story. Arguments of one side, overpowered by

the other side, give rise to heated debates. It teaches all that they balance out one another.

195. This is the origin of the book, showing the qualification of the writer and his relationship with Sai, who renamed the author and brought about this narration and made you listen to it.

196. Let me finish this chapter which is already prolonged. Hemad respectfully bows at the feet of Sai. In due course, the story will be related in details. Please be ready to listen.

197. Only Sai himself is our happiness and prosperity. Only Sai himself is our bliss born out of perfect wisdom. Only Sai himself is our highest renunciation. Our last resort is Sai.

198. By the grace of Sai, we will hear the story of his life to enable us to go through this fearful and difficult worldly existence and uproot all evils in this *Kaliyug*.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the second chapter named "The Purpose of the Narration relating to the recounting of the Naming Ceremony", of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by the Saints and virtuous people.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes:

1. Sea of Salt, Sea of Sugar Syrup, Sea of Liquour, Sea of Ghee, Sea of Curds, Sea of Sweet Water and Sea of Milk.
2. AD 1778.
3. AD 1878.
4. The most prominent among Maharashtrian hagiographers, inspired by Tukaram.
5. Devotional songs in special metres.
6. Said to subsist on moonbeams – the Greek partridge.
7. Black-headed gull. Myth says that this little bird performed the impossible feat of drinking the ocean.
8. That is, devotee's deeds.
9. Like straw.
10. *Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhyaya.*
11. Law of Retribution or the Law of cause and effect.
12. Madhavrao Deshpande, alias Shyama, a school-teacher who was deemed to be close to Baba.
13. Salvation.
14. Divine vision.
15. Guru, who is a loving mother.
16. Thick unleavened bread, eaten by village folk, of millet etc.
17. Ashes from Baba's sacred fire known as Dhuni.

18. Sacrifice on or before conception; sacrifice on vitality in the foetus; sacrifice in the third month of pregnancy; sacrifice in the seventh month; sacrifice in the fourth, sixth or eighth month; giving the infant clarified butter out of a golden spoon before cutting the navel cord; naming the child; carrying him out to be presented to the moon on the third lunar day of the third light fortnight; carrying him out to be presented to the sun in the third or fourth month; feeding him with rice in the sixth or eighth month; tonsure in the second or third year; investiture with the Brahmanical thread; instruction in the Gayatri mantra; loosening the munj (Brahmanical thread) from the loins; marriage; obsequies.
19. Hari Sitaram Dixit, Solicitor of Bombay, whom Baba called 'Kaka'– a devotee par excellence.
20. Narayan Govind Chandorkar, who was called Nana by Baba. He was sent for by Baba, and hence went for the darshan.
21. To go by local train from Bandra to Dadar.
22. Rao Bahadur H.V. Sathe built the first *wada* for pilgrims.
23. Horse-drawn small carriage for four persons.
24. Maruti Laxman-Krishna Noolkar, Sub-Judge of Pandharpur.
25. 'Lendi' is a small village stream – also the excreta of goats, camels etc., the droppings of which are of a particular shape. Baba used to go to the Lendi Baug, regularly, to practise his austerities, of which we will read later.
26. Lake Mansarover, eighteen miles south-east of Kailash (mountain), is Kailash's inseparable complement in every respect. The lake is female to the mountain's male receptivity to its activity, depth to its height, a mirror to a proud statement. Mansarovar, the lake born from the mind of Brahma, is among the most ancient and holy of Hindu pilgrimage sites. Hindu legend tells of twelve Rishis, who retreated to the remote region for meditation and prayer. They stayed many years performing penances and austerities, and were awarded a vision of Shiva and Parvati. But they still lacked a suitable place to perform the daily ablution. The Rishis prayed to Brahma. From the infinite depths of his all encompassing mind, Brahma created Manasarovar, the Lake of the Mind, as a mirror of his greatness. At the moment of its creation, the rishis worshippped a golden linga, the generative symbol of Shiva, rising from the midst of the new-born waters.
27. Chandorkar and Bhate were college friends. Bhate came to Shirdi in 1884(?) and Baba made him stay for 6 months on leave. Bhate never rejoined his duties and left his post of Mamlatdar at Sakori. He was a sceptic turned devotee.
28. At Pandharpur, there is an engraved writing referring to this in detail about this Emperor Mahadev, of the year AD 1270.
29. He daily fed several hundred Brahmins.
30. The four topics of Fasts, Charity, Pilgrimage of Tiraths and Salvation are discussed therein.
31. All vernacular languages eg. Marathi.
32. Different classes of Brahmins.
33. The monthly magazine 'Anand' of April 1923, Vol. 201, Page 414 may be referred.
34. Great Maharashtrian poet saints.
35. The Marathi saying is : "A small piece of turmeric cannot give enough yellowness".
36. His Guru.

Madhavrao Deshpande alias (Shyama)

Madhavrao takes an opportunity to ask Baba : "This Annasaheb (Dabholkar) says that he has in mind to write your biography, according to his ability, provided he has your consent." (Ch.2, ovi 67)

3

The Consent given to Write this Book

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Now I pick up the thread of the earlier narration. Sai gives me full assurance and tells me: "I give you my full permission to narrate my life story.

2. "You perform your duty. Do not have the least doubts in your mind. Have full faith in my words and be of resolute mind.

3. "If you write about my *leelas*, it will wipe out the faults which have arisen due to ignorance. And when you listen to it with faith, your worldly involvements will disappear.

4. "It will cause waves of love and devotion to rise on the ocean of the mind; and, diving into them now and then, will bring up gems of knowledge".

5. When I heard this, I ceased to have any doubts. I bowed at the feet of Sai and then relying on my memory, I started to write this biography.

6. No sooner than these words came from Baba's lips, I thought that it was a good omen. The book will complete itself. I will only be the bondsman physically writing it.

7. See, how inscrutable are the ways of God! They are beyond perception, and are known but to Himself. Even the *Shastras* and *Vedas* are silent and no one is able to plumb their depth.

8. Those experts in *Shastras* and *Vedas*, those intellectuals and scholars, the learned and the disputatious given to splitting hairs – do not follow them.

9. God is the embodiment of His own devotees. He longs for the simple and the guileless. He is completely indebted to those who love Him but He shuns the hypocrites.

10. "In this only lies your well-being. This is also my *avatar*'s fulfilment. This is my repeated preaching. I am always concerned about it.

11. "Oh, Shama, I tell you, furthermore, that whoever takes my name with love, I will fulfil his wishes and increase his devotion.

12. "Whoever sings with feelings of my life, eulogises my powers, virtues and excellences, I will protect him totally, by surrounding him.

13. "Those devotees who have become one with me with heart and soul, they will, naturally, be bound to be happy by listening to the story of my life.

14. "Whoever sings my praises, I will bestow upon him complete happiness, permanent pleasure and contentment. Believe this as the Truth.

15. "It is my promise to redeem the one who, with faith sings my praises, totally surrenders to me, remembers me constantly and meditates on me.

16. "How will anyone be longing for worldly pleasures, who thinks of my name, worships me, studies me, whose holy readings are of me, who meditates on me and who continuously thinks of me?

17. "From the very jaws of death I will snatch away my devotees. Just by listening to my stories diseases will disappear.

18. "Listen to the story with due reverence, meditate fully upon it, intently contemplate upon it and you will attain peace.

19. "The 'You and I' will disappear. The minds of the listeners will be absorbed in God. The mind will be a store of divine energy and full of single-minded and complete faith.

20. "Repetition of the name 'Sai' will burn away all the sins of *Kali-Yuga*. Once having prostrated, past sins born of speech and hearing will be destroyed".

21. Although the work is not an ordinary one, I respectfully obeyed the orders. When there is one as eloquent as Baba, why should I belittle myself?

22. Some devotees were made to build temples; some were made to lose themselves in the joy of *kirtan*[1]; some were sent on pilgrimages and he made me sit down to write.

23. Amongst all the devotees, I am insignificant. I do not know what quality in me made Sai, the ocean of compassion and cloud of mercy, shower his grace on me!

24. Such is the marvel of Guru*'s* grace that it makes a dry and stiff

plant effortlessly and profusely blossom in the most arid soil.

25. In future, some people may build monasteries, some may build temples and some *ghats*, but I will take the straightforward way of the recitation of Sai's story.

26. Some may reverentially worship Sai; some may press his feet gently; but my mind is eager to sing his praises.

27. What could be attained by meditation in the *Krita-Yuga*, by ritualistic sacrifice in *Treta-Yuga* and by ritualistic worship in *Dwapara Yuga,* can now be attained in this present *Kali-Yuga* by chanting the Guru's name and singing his praises.

28. Obviously, I am unqualified. Jack of all trades and master of none! How can I then undertake this enormous and difficult task?

29. If I do not make any efforts and just sit still, I will be committing the sin of disobedience. And if I obey him, how will I be equal to the task?

30. Who is capable of describing the inward state of the powerful Sai? Sai alone can describe it through a devotee of his, by conferring grace upon him.

31. When speech cannot do justice, why then did I develop this craving? Sai gave no opportunity nor scope for anyone to say anything in the matter.

32. When I took up the pen, Baba made me lose my own identity. He himself began writing his story. The credit is entirely his.

33. Who else but a Saint can write the life of Sai? To understand the inconceivable virtues of Baba is like attempting to embrace the sky.

34. I have not the intelligence to speak of his unfathomable powers and greatness, he himself should do it and free himself from the promise.

35. Baba, although I am born a Brahmin, I do not have knowledge of the *Shrutis* and the *Smrutis*. Although this is a blot on this birth of mine, my association with you is to my credit.

36. The *Shrutis* and *Smrutis* are the eyes of a Brahmin. Squint eyed is the person without one of them and blind without both. I am humble and low, because I am deficient in both.

37. You are the staff of the blind for me. Why should I then worry? With its support I will follow you on the trodden path.

38. I do not know how to proceed. Humble as I am I do not know what to do. You must give me the intelligence and get your own

work done.

39. The mystery of that inconceivable power which moves the dumb to speak like 'Brihaspati'[2], and the lame to cross Mount Meru[3] is known only to Baba alone.

40. I am only a humble servant of yours. Do not make me despondent. Till my last breath, get your work done by me.

41. Now, oh you listeners! You have come to know the object of this book. Sai himself writes it for the welfare of his devotees and I am merely his instrument.

42. Just as the flute or the harmonium are not worried about the notes they produce, it being the concern of only the player, likewise why should we feel troubled?

43. Is the nectar which the *Chandrakant*[4] oozes, its own? It is the miraculous work of the moon itself at moonrise.

44. Or, when the ocean has full tide, is it due to its own work? That also is in the hands of the moon and it is not achieved by the ocean.

45. So be it. Just as a buoy with red lights is anchored in the sea to guide the movement of ships by warning them to keep off the rocks and whirlpools,

46. so will the tales of Sai, which in their sweetness put even the nectar in the shade, navigate us safely and will smoothen the difficult paths of the ocean of existence.

47. Blessed are the tales of the saints that penetrate into the consciousness through the ears and cleanse the bodily ego and destroy the sense of duality.

48. As more and more of these tales are stored in your heart, the doubts run helter-skelter; and when the store of spiritual knowledge grows, your identification with the body diminishes.

49. To describe Baba's pure fame and to listen to it with all your heart, will burn away the sins of the devotees. This makes for easy attainment of salvation.

50. What is the nature of Brahman which is beyond illusion? And what are the means to conquer that illusion? God favours his devotees who lead virtuous and pious lives. How else is it possible for his devotees?

51. What is perfect bliss? Devotion, deliverance and detachment, what are they? All things belonging to the four-fold *varnas*[5] and to the four-fold *ashrams*[6] are one. These subjects are very abstruse.

52. Those who are interested in these subjects should fulfil their desires by studying the works of Dñyaneshwar, Eknath and others and enjoy them happily.

53. In *Kritayuga*, it was controlling the senses and subduing of passions; in *Tretayuga*, sacrifices; in *Dwapara*, rituals; and in *Kaliyuga*, reciting the name and singing the praises – a simple means of salvation.

54. Listening to the life-story of the Guru is the easy road to salvation for the four varnas like Brahmins and others, including women, *Shudras* and even the casteless.

55. Only those who have good deeds to their credit from their past births will listen to these stories. If someone feels sleepy God will wake him up.

56. Those who are uncontrollably engaged in worldly pleasures and who become abject when these are denied to them, for them the nectar of the stories of the saints will free them from these vices.

57. Performing yoga and sacrifices, practising meditation and concentration requires great efforts, whereas listening to these tales requires no efforts other than attentiveness.

58. Let the devout and virtuous listeners listen to this pure story of Sai, by which they will be benefitted, because the powerful five sins[7] will be burnt completely.

59. Chained as we are to the worldly existence, which conceals from our view the Real Self, we will find that by listening to these stories, the bonds will be loosened; and we will get back the original state or Real Self.

60. These tales should be remembered throughout life and studied daily. They will free the listeners from worldly affairs and bring peace to all.

61. While reading and listening, with devotion and faith, let me be able to meditate on Sai. Let him appear before my eyes in his *saguna* form[8] and let it be imprinted on my mind.

62. In this way, let my devotion to the Guru grow and let me attain detachment from the world. Let the urge to remember his name become intense and make my mind pure.

63. With this object in mind, Sainath conferred grace on me and made me the instrument, while he himself wrote the book.

64. Although the cow's udder is full of milk to overflowing, it is natural for her to release the milk only to her calf. So is Sai's love.

65. For the sake of my longing like the *Chatak* bird[9], Sai mother showered happiness, quenching my modest thirst and he will quench that of his devotees abundantly.

66. How marvellous are love and devotion! Overflowing with the instinctive love for her child, the mother forces her milk into its mouth, even when the child does not ask for it.

67. Who knows her fatigue? The child is not aware of it. Who else but the mother will take the child to her breast without asking?

68. When a baby is decorated with ornaments, the baby knows no significance of it. Only the mother knows the pleasures. Similar is the way of the *Sadguru*.

69. This child-like feeling that I have, who will lovingly satisfy? Who else but the mother will have a real concern? That kind of affection is rare.

70. To be born to a virtuous mother is a great fortune bestowed by God. Yet the child is blissfully ignorant of the mother's pangs and its birth.

71. May that be whatever. Baba said something more in this regard which I will tell you. Oh! You good listeners, please listen to it with due respect and attention.

72. In the year 1916, my service with the government came to an end and a suitable pension was fixed. The time came for me to take a trip to Shirdi.

73. It was the day of the Guru *Purnima*. The devotees had gathered to perform the Guru *puja*. Anna Chinchanikar[10], on his own, made a request to Baba. Listen to what his recommendation was.

74. Anna was very worried about me. He pleaded before Baba; "As his family is increasing, have compassion on him.

75. "Give him another service. This pension will not suffice. Ward off Annasaheb's worries. Do something of this sort".

76. In reply, Baba said: "He will get another service. Let him serve me now. He will get happiness in the world.

77. "His household will always be prosperous, and he will not want for anything till he lives. If he resorts to Me with full faith, his difficulties will be removed.

78. "There will be persons who say that they will behave as they like, as they have strayed from the path. Those who have turned their backs on religious observances, turn away from such people first.

79. "If you come across them, swerve away from them. Consider them to be very dangerous. Be afraid of even their shadows and go out of the way to avoid them.

80. "One who is lawless, immoral, thoughtless, without any purpose, who cannot distinguish between right and wrong – how will he achieve any good in life?

81. "But without some special bonds of past lives no one comes to us. May it be a dog, a pig or a fly. So do not repulse anybody.

82. "Henceforth, he should serve Me with love and devotion. The Supreme Being will bless him. He will receive a permanent treasure.

83. "In what manner should he worship? Who am I? How can he know with certainty? Sai's body is perishable, while Brahman is imperishable".

84. "All pervading as I am, I am the personification of the eightfold nature". So revealed the Lord to Arjuna while expounding the Gita."

85. "The world made of movable and immovable objects, of names and forms, is manifested by Me in the form of the eightfold nature. The phenomenon is created by Me only.

86. "The mystical symbol *Aum* expresses Me. I am the only connotation of it. In the whole of the universe, there exists a multitude of things but I am immanent in all of them.

87. "There is nothing but the *Atman*, so what desire should there be? I am all exhaustive in everything in all ten directions.

88. "Where all is filled with the whole, the feeling of 'Me' and 'Mine' melts away. What desires can we have when I am all pervasive?"

89. "Desires are born of the intellect. They do not have any connection with the soul. Sai Maharaj is the embodiment of the *Atman*. Whence can desires arise in him?

90. "There are various kinds of desires. But once the essence is known of 'Who am I', then they dissolve like the hailstones in the blazing hot rays of the sun.

91. "I am not the mind, intellect, or the sense organs. Nor am I the matter or the gross form. I am also not the golden egg from which the universe evolved before it revealed itself. But I am the Ancient Witness without a beginning.

92. "In this way, I am beyond the senses. I have no interest in the sense objects. But there is nothing where I am not present. I am not the doer or the cause of any deed.

93. "With the realisation that the mind, intellect and other senses are gross instruments of the physical body, detachment will arise unveiling the concealed Self-Knowledge.

94. "To forget one's own real nature is itself the illusion; to remember the pure and complete bliss is Me – none but the Supreme One, Pure Consciousness.

95. "To turn oneself towards that Me is itself a service and devotion to Me. When I experience the bliss of the mind, it is knowledge in the pure form.

96. "The soul is Brahman itself. Bliss from understanding knowledge is Brahman. By the knowledge of the untrue nature of the world, the illusion about the world will pass away. Brahman is Truth. That is Me.

97. "I am eternal, pure, enlightened, the liberated one. I am Vasudeva, the sacred letter *Aum*. I am the truth. Your good lies in worshipping Me with true faith and devotion.

98. "Thus realising my true nature serve Me in the right way. Moreover, surrender to Me completely. And be one with Me.

99. "When the river surrenders to the ocean, can it come back? Will there be a separate identity when she embraces the ocean?

100. "Just as a wick soaked in oil when joined to a flame of light, becomes itself a bright light, in the same way a person reaches the status of a sage at the feet of the sage.

101. "He who thinks of nothing but *Allah Malik*, the Supreme Being and the Pure Consciousness, he has peace, has no desires and looks upon all with an equal eye. How can he have a separate identity from the Supreme Being?

102. "Where there is not the awareness of oneself, where there is no ego, where there is absence of strife or quarrel (twofold nature of the world), where there is no wish for worldly possessions, where these four virtues reside, can there exist the ego?"

103. Summing up, in Sai's nature these eight virtues exist in their complete form. Where is the place then for the ego? How can I then nurse such egotism?

104. "He whose self is pervading in the universe, I am part and parcel of Him. Surrender at the feet of Sai. This will mean My service.

105. "To serve Me and to sing my praises, to surrender to Me completely will lead to union with Me. So says Krishna in the *Bhagwat*.

106. "Just as the worm by constantly thinking of the bee itself becomes the bee, in the same way, when a disciple constantly contemplates upon his Guru he becomes similar to his Guru.

107. "By using the word 'similar', still a distinction remains. Even that is not tolerated by the Guru, even for a moment, because Guru's existence is not possible without the disciple; and the disciple is not separate from the Guru".

108. So it was. The one whom I was ordered to worship, he explained who he was. In support of what I have been saying I am reminded of an incident which I will relate now.

109. A Rohilla (Pathan) came to Shirdi and was attracted by Baba's virtues. He stayed there for a long time and lovingly devoted himself to Baba.

110. He was hefty like a male-buffalo. He was self-willed, and cared for no one. He wore only a *kafni* upto his ankles and came and lived in the *Masjid*.

111. Whether it was day or night, whether it was in the *Masjid* or the Chavdi[11] he would recite the verses from the Koran at a high pitch, with extreme enthusiasm and full freedom.

112. Maharaj was Peace Incarnate. But the villagers were very weary. Even at midnight his continuous recitation would disturb everybody's sleep.

113. During the day, the people had to toil in the hot sun, in the fields and forests. At night, they could not get undisturbed sleep. Therefore the people were annoyed.

114. May be, Baba was not troubled. As for the people, they felt that they had committed a great sin. No peaceful sleep at night. They were annoyed with the Rohilla.

115. They were on the horns of dilemma. How long could they endure this? Day and night, this nuisance was a big problem for them. They were greatly worried.

116. Rohilla was, as it is, a head strong person. To make matters worse, he had Baba's strong support. He became more uncontrollable than what he was before and gave himself airs.

117. He became arrogant and disdainful and behaved insolently with the people. He behaved more recklessly than before and the whole village turned against him.

118. Sai being very kind hearted, like a mother, always shielded those who surrendered to him. Therefore, all the villagers came to him and entreated him.

119. But Baba paid no attention. On the contrary, he told the villagers: "Do not harass the Rohilla. He is very dear to me.

120. "This Rohilla's wife is a virago and not ready to stay with him. She is eager to come to me by eluding him.

121. "That virtueless woman does not observe the veil. She is without modesty and shameless. If driven out, she comes back forcibly into the house.

122. "As soon as he stops shouting[12], the wicked woman seizes the opportunity to enter. When he shouts she flees, leaving him pure of speech, body and mind. That gives me profound happiness.

123. "No one should oppose him. Let him shout to his heart's content. I cannot pass the night without him. I have great pleasure because of him.

124. "Shouts of this type are greatly to my advantage. In this way the Rohilla is benevolent and makes me extremely happy.

125. "Let him shout as he pleases. In that itself is my well-being. Otherwise, that wicked wife will trouble me.

126. "When he himself gets tired, he will keep quiet automatically. Your purpose will be served and that wicked woman will not trouble me".

127. When Maharaj said so, any further effort was futile. If Baba's mind is not disturbed, then why should we be concerned.

128. As it is, the Rohilla was very enthusiastic. Moreover, he was now licensed by Baba.[13] So he started to recite the Koranic verses very loudly and created chaos.

129. The people were amazed at Baba's forbearance. Instead of the splitting headache, the shouting sent him into rapture.

130. How horrible were the shouts! It was a wonder that they did not parch his throat! But Baba still persisted in telling all: "Do not admonish him".

131. Outwardly, the Rohilla appeared to be a mad Moslem saint, but he respected Baba greatly. Happily, according to the tenets of his religion, he would recite the verses of the Koran.

132. He did not care whether his own voice was soft or shrill. No sooner was he inspired that he would start shouting the name of God.

133. Nature had endowed him with a rattling voice. He regularly and constantly shouted '*Allah Ho Akbar*'[14] and the verses with great joy.

134. Baba disliked association with one who loathed God's name. Then

why would he think of driving away the Rohilla when he was continuously repeating God's name?

135. "Wherever my devotees are singing my praises I am present there. There I am without rest, alert and without sleep". As if it were to prove the utterance in the *'Bhagvat Gita'* that Baba behaved in this way!

136. The Rohilla subsisted on whatever he got by way of alms or else went hungry occasionally. How could he have a wife who could go and bother Baba?

137. The Rohilla was reduced to penury. How could he have a marriage or a wife! Baba was a celibate from childhood. So the whole story was allegorical.

138. Let him sing with a loud voice. Baba is satisfied by the recitation of the verses. He listened to them day in and day out. Sleep was like poison compared to the verse.

139. Compared to the enlightening preachings of the verses, the complaints of the villagers were hollow. This was a strategy followed by Baba to give the villagers the correct perspective.

140. In this manner Baba conveyed the lesson to one and all that he liked the Rohilla's company because he loved God's name.

141. The things perceived, one who perceives and that which he perceives (all the three), is God for him. Such a person, whether he be a Brahmin or Pathan, is regarded as the same.

142. Once, after the noon *Arati*, when the people started returning home, Baba spoke sweet words from his lips. Hear them.

143. "Wherever you are, and whatever you may be doing, always bear it in mind that I shall continue to be informed of the minutest details of your deeds.

144. "In this manner, as I am described, I dwell in the minds of all. I am in the hearts of all, all pervading. I am the Lord of all.

145. "I fill the entire creation, within and without, to the point of overflowing. This universe is directed by God and I am the one who holds the reins.

146. "I am the Mother of all beings. I am the equilibrium of the three *gunas* [15]. I promote the activities of the senses. I am the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer.

147. "One who concentrates on Me, for him nothing is difficult. But the moment he forgets Me, *Maya* will attack him.

148. "Whatever is perceived is my image only, whether it be a worm, an ant, a poor wretch or a king". This immeasurable universe, consisting of mobile and immobile things – these are Baba's own image.

149. What a delightful indication! There is no difference between the sages and God. Without any distinction they take form for the benefit of the universe, consisting of the movable and the immovable.

150. If one wishes to surrender at the feet of the Guru, one should sing the praises of the Guru or recite the life-story of the Guru or listen to the tales about him with devotion.

151. One who is desirous of obtaining knowledge should listen so intently that he becomes one with the preaching, with assimilation. Thus the Supreme Energy will appear before him and the mind will be elevated.

152. Even if one is engrossed in worldly affairs and one chances to hear the tales of a saint, without making the slightest efforts, they will still do good because such is their nature.

153. Then, if they are listened to with faith and devotion, how much good can be gained! Oh! Listeners, just think, in your own interest.

154. The devotion to the Guru*'s* feet will develop and the well-being will tremendously increase gradually. No other rites or rituals are necessary. The Supreme Good will be attained.

155. Once the mind is disciplined in this way, the longing to listen to the stories will increase. The bonds of sense-objects will easily break away and extreme happiness will pervade.

156. Hearing these sweet words of Baba, I resolved not to take up any service any longer but to devote myself entirely to the service of the Guru.

157. But my mind kept hovering around Baba's assurance, "He'll get employment easily", and wondered if I would get proof of it.

158. Can Baba's words prove false? That will never come to pass! I might again start working amongst people but it will not be beneficial for me.

159. It is true that Anna spontaneously inquired about me. Nevertheless, it was not as if it was not my desire also. But this is not the fate which would befall me.

160. In the heart of my hearts, I also sought employment to support my family. And Sai offered me a sugar-coated pill by the way of a remedy.

161. That medicine with the hope of something sweet (to follow) I drank, and I became fortunate. A job came[16] unexpectedly and I accepted it out of desire for money.

162. Even if it is jaggery, one will be tired of eating it continuously. I preferred licking the finger dipped in the honey of Baba's preachings.

163. The job was not permanent. It ended as unexpectedly as it came. Baba made me stick to what I was doing to enjoy the pleasure of being with him in one place.

164. This universe full of animate and inanimate things is a manifestation of God. But God is beyond even the universe; and, the Supreme Spirit beyond all.

165. God is not separate from the worldly affairs. But the worldly affairs are different from God. Because the world receives the energy from Him and thrives upon it; God is the basis of the world.

166. Please understand that there are eight ways[17] of worshipping God, by doing *pujas* of images, sacrificial fire etc. But compared to everything, the Guru is the best.

167. Krishna himself was the Supreme Brahman. Yet He bowed at Sandipani's feet, and said : "Remembrance of the *Sadguru* is the surest way to please Me, who is Narayana.

168. Singing the praises of the *Sadguru* rather than My praises is dearer to me a thousandfold. Such is the excellence and the profound significance of the *Sadguru*".

169. He who turns his back on the praise of the Guru is an unfortunate sinner. He endures the painful cycle of births and deaths and becomes the cause of his own ruin.

170. Birth and death, follow one after the other. This is an endless circle. Hence let us listen to these tales to achieve our own deliverance.

171. Even casual words uttered by the saints break the bonds of false knowledge and save us in times of calamities. So let us all assimilate these stories.

172. We do not know what the future will be and what help they would give (at such moments). This is the play of the almighty. The loving devotee is just a spectator.

173. Being without any intelligence or wisdom, how would I explain the good fortune befalling me that I should have a powerful Guru like Sai? This is also his *leela*.

174. I have already narrated the purpose of this book and the assurance

given to me (by Baba). Due to Him, the direction was received of the distinction of You and I, and of worship.

175. Now, you listeners will be listening, in the next Chapter, to an account of how Samartha Sainath appeared in Shirdi.

176. All of you, young and old, simple and believing, spare a few moments from your worldly life and listen to this unique story of Sai.

177. Though Sai is himself an incarnation, he, remaining unaffected, enacts various roles just like a householder engrossed in his daily life; and, acts according to the dictates of *Maya*.

178. "*Samartha Sai*"! With this *mantra*, for those who serve at his holy feet, he moves the strings for the deliverance of his devotees from worldly existence. Sacred is his life story.

179. In brief, holy is the story of Sai. The hearts will be purified of those who recite and those who listen.

180. Listening to the stories with love will dispel all worldly afflictions. Sai, the Cloud of Mercy, will shower grace; and, complete and pure knowledge will appear.

181. Sloth, a wandering mind, attachment to sense-objects and indulgence of the palate – these are the obstacles which come in the way of listening. Steer clear of these, and the listening will become a happy experience.

182. You do not need ceremonies to complete the rituals; you do not need fasting to torture the body; you do not need to visit the tirthas. It is sufficient to listen to the story.

183. Genuine love and awareness of the core of devotion will easily lead to the attainment of the highest good; and incorrect knowledge and the knowledge of the two-fold nature will be destroyed.

184. You need not make efforts for other means. Let us listen to the Saicharita. It will exhaust all *karmas*, of the past and the present life, which result in rebirth. Not the least effect will remain of them.

185. As a miser, wherever he is, has his mind fixed on his hidden treasure, day and night, in the same easy way Sai should dwell in our minds.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the third chapter named "The Consent given to Write this Book" of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by the Saints and virtuous people.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes:

1. Celebrating praises of God with music and singing.
2. Deity of Speech.
3. A fabulous mountain, round which all the planets are said to revolve. It is also said to consist of gold and gems.
4. The moon-gem.
5. Four castes i.e. brahmins, kshatriyas, vaishyas and sudras.
6. Four stages of life i.e. *brahmacharya*, *grihistha, vanaprastha* and *sanyas* .
7. Detailed in Chapter 9.
8. With attributes and physical form.
9. Bird fabled to drink water only from the clouds, and therefore, supposed to be eagerly expectant of rain.
10. Damodar Ghanshyam Babare – referred to further in Chapter 24.
11. Village hall – meeting place.
12. His *Kalmas* or verses from the Koran.
13. The Marathi saying is : "The month of *Falgun* had arrived", meaning thereby 'spring had come' – in short, he blossomed forth.
14. God is Great.
15. The three are *Rajjas, Satva* and *Tamas*, which are the constituent qualities of nature.
16. For six months, the author worked in the Secretariat, thanks to Mr. Mead, whom he met unexpectedly when he went to the Office of the Accountant General to collect his pension (This was in 1921). Mr. Mead had been known to the author as he had served him as a head-clerk and Marathi tutor, when he was Chief Secretary of Government of Bombay.
17. Actually, classically, nine modes of Bhakti are given (1) *Shravanam* (hearing of the Lord's *leelas* or *kathas*); (2) *Kirtanam* (musical chanting of His name/ *leelas*/*kathas*); (3) *Smaranam* (remembrance of the Lord); (4) *Padasevanam* (service of His Feet, service of the Guru, Parents, Country and Humanity); (5) *Archanam* (offering of flowers, sacred leaves); (6) *Vandanam* (prostrations before the Lord and mental prostrations to every being); (7) *Dasyam* (having a relationship of Master and servant with the Lord); (8) *Sakhyam* (having an attitude of friendship with the Lord); and (9) *Atma Nivedanam* (total surrender to the Lord).

Blessed are the tales of the saints that penetrate into the consciousness through the ears and cleanse the bodily ego and destroy the sense of duality. (Ch.3, ovi 47)

4

The Appearance of Sai Samartha

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. In the previous two chapters, the invocation was accomplished. Then the purpose for writing this book was told; and, the qualifications of the author to write, introductory reasons and framing of definitions were discussed in detail.

2. Now, for what reasons do the saints take birth on earth, and the sinfulness of the human beings, which leads to their appearance on earth.

3. Oh! you honoured listeners! I am a particle of dust at your feet. Pay attention – is the favour I ask of you, which I am not ashamed to do.

4. As it is, the biography of a saint is pleasing. Moreover, Sai's story is like nectar. When the numerous devotees of Sai partake it, they are full of happiness.

5. Brahmins are neglecting the duties of caste and birth. The low castes are trying to pass themselves off as Brahmins. The religious teachers are disrespected and the people try to bully others.

6. Nobody cares for the dictates of religion. In every house all are self-styled scholars. One tries to overpower the other and nobody listens to anybody.

7. Drinks and eatables which are forbidden are savoured. Right behaviour and right thinking – all these are completely disregarded. And Brahmins actually eat meat and drink liquor openly.

8. Under the garb of religion, they indulge in atrocities; and spread hatred amongst the sects because of which people are harassed.

9. When the Brahmins are reluctant towards daily bath and offering of prayers; when the orthodox are reluctant to practise the religious rites; and the *yogis* are reluctant to do recitation and prayers with

deep concentration, then the time is ripe for the saints to take birth.

10. When people believe that happiness consists only in society, wealth, status, progeny and family and turn away from spiritual values, then the saints manifest themselves.

11. They lose the highest good because of the decline of *dharma*. In order to bring about a revival of *dharma,* the saints appear.

12. When people, to the detriment of their health, longevity and prosperity, go astray in pursuing their sexual needs, and completely miss the chance of their upliftment, at such times saints take birth.

13. To protect the religion of *Vedic* Hinduism, to annihilate the sinfulness and to protect the down-trodden, poor and weak, the saints incarnate on this earth.

14. The saints themselves are liberated souls and are always ready for the betterment of the weak. They take birth only for the sake of others and have no self-interest.

15. They build the foundation in the form of renunciation around the sanctum sanctorum of active worldly life; build the temple of ultimate good and easily elevate the devotees.

16. By working for religion and for the awakening of religion, they achieve their mission in life; and having fulfilled their goal they give up their mortal coil.

17. The individual soul is itself the Supreme Spirit which gives joy to the whole world. And the Supreme Spirit is the Guru Himself – Shankara, the giver of bliss.

18. He is the transcendent abode of love. He is eternal, constant and unchangeable. He is beyond space, time and matter. He is beyond definition – indefinable!

19. The four modes of speech viz. *'Para'* (that which only the *yogis* practise and is symbolised by the mystic syllable *'Aum'*); '*Pashyanti*' (speech in the second stage which has its seat in the mind); '*Madhyama*,' (speech in the third stage which has its seat in the trachea); '*Vaikhari*,' (articulate utterance) have failed to describe Him; and even the wisdom and ingenuity of the *Vedas* have accepted defeat and taken recourse to the negative description '*Neti*, *Neti*' – not this, not this.

20. The six *Shastras*[1] and their six philosophies have avoided describing Him. The *Puranas* and the *kirtans* have also become weary. Praying with the heart, body and mind is the only means to understand Him.

21. Such is the life story of the Saint Sai whose deeds are extremely mysterious. By listening to the pure story, why should the ears be not purified?

22. He is the moving force behind all the sense-organs. He gives inspiration to write the book and because of him the writing of the biography is orderly and effortless.

23. He resides in everybody's heart; he is the dweller within and without; he is all pervading. Why should I then unnecessarily worry. For what?

24. When I recall his virtues, one by one, my mind comes to a standstill. How will my words be able to describe him? It is best to keep silent with respect to him.

25. The nose should inhale the fragnance of the flower; the skin should know the difference between hot and cold by the touch; the eyes should enjoy the beauty – thus the senses make themselves happy.

26. The tongue knows the sweetness of the sugar but cannot express it; similarly, I am unable to describe the virtues of Sai.

27. When the *Sadguru* determines, he himself will give the inspiration. He puts into words that which is undescribable, through his chosen men.

28. My saying this is not just a formality. These words are not just superficial. These words are genuinely sincere and I pray for your respectful attention.

29. Like Gangapur, Narsimhawadi, Audumbar and Bhillawadi,[2] so also at the banks of the Godavari the holy place of Shirdi is situated.

30. The holy banks of the Godavari, the holy waters of the Godavari, the cool breezes of the Godavari – these all destroy the darkness of the material world.

31. The sanctity of the river Godavari is renowned all over the world. Hers has been the land of saints, one nobler than the other.

32. There are many holy places on the banks of the Gomati[3] whose waters wash away the sins. Drinking the water and bathing in it cures the ills of worldly existence. This is described in the *Puranas*.

33. That Godavari of Ahmednagar district, of Kopergaon Taluka, shows the way to Shirdi, which is near to Kopergaon.

34. As you cross over to the opposite bank of the Godavari, at a distance of about six miles, as the *tonga*[4] enters Nimgaon, Shirdi is immediately within sight.

35. Nivritti, Dñyandeo, Muktabai, Namadeo, Janabai, Gora *Kumbhar*

(the potter), Gorai, Tukaram, Narhari, Narsibhai Mehta, Sajan Kasai (the butcher) and Savta - Mali (the gardener)....

36. these have been the saints of yore. At present, also, there are a number of them, who regard the whole world as one family, and are the support of the sorrowing and the miserable.

37. Ramdas, the foremost of the saints, left the banks of the Godavari and appeared on the banks of the Krishna, for the deliverance of the world.

38. So also Sai, the great *Yogeshwar* (ascetic), by the great good fortune of Shirdi, for the sake of the deliverance of the world, appeared on the banks of the Godavari.

39. '*Parees*' turns iron into gold. Similar are the saints to the '*Parees*'. The deeds of the saints are out-of-the-ordinary. They give their own image to the devotees.

40. Transcending all distinctions and seeing the Brahman manifested in the whole universe, they only see the glory of Brahman reflected uniformly in themselves and in the world around.

41. In this way, when there is realisation that the whole universe is one's own self, how can the happiness be described? It will lead to the experience of the highest good.

42. When one attains such oneness, why should there be any enmity or fear of anybody? You need to resort to no one else.

43. Like Damaji at Mangalvadi, Ramdas at Sajjangad, Narsimha Saraswati at Wadi, so Sainath was at Shirdi.

44. Difficult and impassable, as the worldly existence is, he had triumphed over it. Peace was his ornament and he was the treasure-house of knowledge.

45. He was the haven[5] of the *Vaishnavites*, the most benevolent among the benevolent. In bestowing spiritual knowledge, he was the *avatar* of *Karna*[6]. Sai is the quintessence of Truth.

46. Without any attachment to the perishable, absorbed in his own self, he concentrates on the single goal of the Supreme. Indescribable indeed was the state of his being.

47. Unaffected by the worldly abundance or the absence thereof, unmoved by the joys and sorrows of the other world (what is to happen after death), his heart was as pure (clear) as a mirror and his speech showered nectar.

48. The king, the pauper, the poor, and the meek were all equal in his eyes. He was beyond honour or insults. He saw God in every living being.

49. He behaved ordinarily with all people, witnessed the dance and frolic of the *Muralis* [7], listened to the songs and *gazals*, swaying to them (with great relish), but his inner state of *samadhi* was absolutely undisturbed.

50. The name of Allah was imprinted on his heart. He slept when the world was awake; he was awake when the world was asleep. His nature was like a peaceful deep ocean.

51. It is difficult to determine through which *Ashrama* [8], or stage of life, he was passing; or, the exact state of his activity. Very often he did not even move from his seat but he knew everything that was happening.

52. Outwardly there was a *durbar*-like grandeur; he talked of a thousand and one (innumerable) things. This was a permanent show arranged by him. But inwardly he was committed to silence.

53. He used to stand leaning against the wall, take rounds in the mornings and the afternoons, going to the *Lendi* or the *Chavadi*. But undisturbed was the state of self-realisation.

54. I do not know in which birth, at what time, on what occasion, in what way, I performed the penance as the fruit of which Sai took me under his wings.

55. Should I call this the fruit of my penance? But, no, I am born sinful. It is Sai himself who is kind and loving; and, definitely it is his grace.

56. Although born a '*Siddha*'[9], his ways were those of a '*Sadhaka*'[10]. He had no pride and was full of humility; and, he pleased everyone.

57. Just as Eknath and Dñyaneshwar brought glory to Paithan and Alandi, so also Sai made Shirdi a celebrated place of exaltation.

58. Blessed are the blades of grass and stones in Shirdi which, without any effort, were able to kiss Baba's feet, everyday, and were able to bear the dust of his feet on their heads.

59. For us Shirdi is Pandharpur. Shirdi is our Jagannathpuri, Dwarka, Gaya, Kashi – Vishweshwar (name of temple). Shirdi is our Rameshwar[10a].

60. Shirdi is our Badri-Kedar, Shirdi is Nashik-Tryambakeshwar, Shirdi is Ujjain-Mahakaleshwar, Shirdi is Mahabaleshwar-Gokarn[10b].

61. The very association with Sai in Shirdi is like the study of *Nigamas* (*Vedic* scriptures) and *Agamas* (post-*Vedic* scriptures of major sects like Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnavas), and the healing touch in the afflictions of life. He is the easy way to the supreme goal.

62. Samartha Sai's *darshan* is itself a means for our union with the Divine; and by conversing with him our sins are washed away.

63. Pressing his feet is like bathing at the confluence of the three rivers (Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati). And, partaking of the water washings of his feet uproots all desires.

64. His command is like a *Vedic* sermon for us. Purifying and sacred, in every sense, are his *udi* (Sacred ash from his *Dhuni*) and his *prasad* (sacramental food).

65. Sai is, to us, the Supreme Brahman, the highest spiritual bliss. Sai is our Sree Krishna, Sree Rama; and Sai is our rest and refuge.

66. Sai is beyond the two-fold nature of the world, never sad or happy, always engrossed in his own self, and permanently in the Brahman.

67. Shirdi is the centre, but Baba's realm is far and wide. It extends upto Punjab, Calcutta, North India, Gujarat, Deccan and Karnataka.

68. The *Samadhi* of Sai at Shirdi is a gathering place for all the saints. Every step on the way to it severs one link of the chain of worldly existence.

69. A mere *darshan* of his *Samadhi* is the fulfilment of one's life. How can I describe then the good fortune of those who have spent their lives in his service?

70. Over the *Masjid* and the *wada*, rows of beautiful flags flutter high in the sky which seem to beckon the devotees.

71. Baba is a renowned saint whose fame has spread far and wide. Some vow to him in faith for the fulfilment of their wishes, while some attain inward peace by a mere *darshan* of him.

72. Whatever may be the secret wishes of anyone, whether pure or unscrupulous, their mind is at peace at the very sight of him. People are, therefore, surprised in their heart of hearts.

73. The same marvellous vision, which one has at the sight of Vitthal and Rakhumai at Pandharpur, is experienced in Shirdi by Baba's *darshan*.

74. If anyone feels that this is an exaggeration, then listen to the words of Gaulibuva, who was a firm devotee of Vitthal, to dispel all doubts.

75. He is a *varkari* (regular visitor) of Pandharpur. As he visited Pandharpur every year, he also visited Shirdi once a year. He loved Baba very much.

76. Buva was accompanied by an ass and a companion who was also his disciple. He continuously chanted 'Ram – Krishna – Hari'.

77. He was ninety five years old. He spent four months of the monsoon

on the banks of the Godavari and stayed for about eight months at Pandharpur. He visited Baba every year.

78. Gazing at Baba in all humility, he would say : "This is Pandharinath incarnate, protector of the destitute, the merciful.

79. "Can anyone become a saint by wearing *dhoties* with silken borders? To become a saint what is required is hard penance till the bones wear out thin and blood becomes water.

80. "Can one attain God-hood without efforts? This is Pandharirao incarnate. The world is ignorant. Believing this firmly, perceive the divinity behind it".

81. These are the words of the great devotee, who loved Pandharinath. Compared to him, what experience can a humble man like me boast of? Let the listeners' own experiences be the best guide.

82. Baba loved the '*Nama-Smarna*'. He himself constantly repeated the words '*Allah-Malik*'. He would arrange for a seven day ceaseless chanting of the '*Nama*' in his presence, day and night.

83. On one occasion, Baba commanded Das Ganu[11] to conduct such a seven-day chanting, when Das Ganu sought an assurance from Baba that then Vitthal should appear in person.

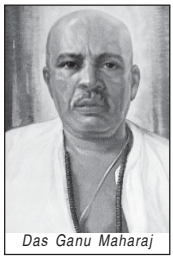
84. Baba, laying his hand on his heart, assured him with confidence and told him firmly: "Yes, of course, Vitthal in person will appear. The devotee should be full of faith.

85. "Dankapuri of Dakurnath, or Pandhari of Vitthal, or Dwarka Nagari of Ranchod are here only, in search of which you need not go a long distance.

86. "Is Vitthal going to come from anywhere else, leaving his private quarters? He would appear here, springing up out of the intense devotion of the devotee.

87. "By serving his parents Pundalik captivated the God of Gods. Seeing Pundalik's devotion, the Lord stood on the brick and waited".

88. After the seventh day of the chanting, Baba's words came true and it is said that Das Ganu had *darshan* of Lord Vitthal at Shirdi. Thus Baba's prediction was experienced and verified.


Das Ganu Maharaj

89. Once when Kakasaheb Dixit was in meditation, after his routine morning bath, he got *darshan* of Vitthal.

90. Later on, when he went for Baba's *darshan*, Baba surprised him by asking: "Had not Vitthal Patil come? Did you meet him?

91. "That Vitthal is very elusive. Hold to him firmly otherwise he will slip away, if your attention wavers even for a moment".

92. This episode took place in the morning. Again, in the afternoon, see further evidence of the joyous appearance of Vitthal.

93. A hawker from another place outside Shirdi came to the village with the intention of selling twenty to twentyfive beautiful pictures of Vitthal.

94. It was the exact replica of the image which was seen in the morning meditation. Dixit was surprised and he recalled Baba's words.

95. Dixit very lovingly purchased one of the pictures by paying the price to the seller and installed it with devotion for the daily worship.

96. There is another beautiful episode of the worship of Vitthal being equivalent to offering respect to Sai. Listen to it with joy and happiness.

97. Bhagwantrao Shirsagar's father, one of the leading devotees of Vitthal, often went to Pandharpur.

98. There was an image of Vitthal in the home. But when the father passed away, the performance of the *puja*, offering of the '*naivedya*'[12] etc. was stopped. Even the rituals at the time of death anniversary were discontinued.

99. Bhagwantrao also gave up the annual pilgrimage to Pandharpur. But when he went to Shirdi, Baba recalled his father and said : "He was my friend.

100. "He is my beloved friend's son. That is why I have dragged him here. He does not offer *naivedya*. He starves me also.

101. "He keeps Vitthal also hungry. Therefore, I brought him to Shirdi. Now I'll remind him and make him do the *puja*".

102. Once knowing that it was *Parva* (holy time), Das Ganu wished to bathe at Prayag Tirth and came to Baba to take his permission.

103. Baba, in return said : "You need not go that far for it. This itself is our Prayag bank. Have strong faith in your heart".

104. Oh, how can I praise Baba's greatness! As Das Ganu put his head at Baba's feet, water trickled out from both his toes as if it was the water of Ganga and Yamuna, oozing out.

105. Having witnessed this miracle, Das Ganu was overcome with emotion. What a great favour was bestowed on him by Baba! Tears sprang from his eyes.

106. His speech was inspired. Love brimmed up in his heart. He felt

satisfied only after describing Baba's immeasurable greatness and wonderful deeds.

107. To gratify the eagerness of the listeners, I shall insert the sweet song composition here:-

Song

O *Sadgururaya*, boundless is your power and marvellous your deeds. You are the kind one who is the ship which takes the animate and inanimate beings across the worldly ocean. (Refrain).

You transformed yourself into Veni-Madhav (Vishnu) and *made* your feet into prayag here. You showed the currents of Ganga and Yamuna flowing from your toes. (1)

You are Brahma (born of the lotus), Vishnu (Lord of Kamala) and Shiva, the embodiment of the Trinity. And, on this earth, you manifest as Sai, the Samartha. (2)

In the early morning, like Brahma you utter words of wisdom; and sometimes, you exhibit your violent nature and frightening appearance of Rudra, resorting to the quality of *Tamo guna*. (3)

Sometimes like Sree Krishna, you indulge in child-like pranks; and become the swan in the lake of the devotee's heart. (4)

If we call you a Muslim, then you have love for *Gandha* (sandalwood paste); If we call you a Hindu, you always happily reside in the *Masjid*. (5)

If we call you rich, you are seen going about begging alms; If we call you a fakir, then with your favours (your generosity) you have put Kuber to shame. (6)

If we call your house a *Masjid,* then fire is seen burning there; The *dhuni* (pit kindled with woodfire) always burns to distribute *udi* to the people. (7)

From morning the devotees in their simplicity come and worship you; And when the sun is at its zenith at noon, your *arati* is performed. (8)

Devotees stand all around you like attendants of Gods and holding whisks and swishes in their hand fan you. (9)

Horns, Clocks, *Shenai*, Gongs, Bells resound; And attendants in uniforms (mace bearers) wearing belts proclaim your glory at the gates. (10)

At the time of the *Arati* you look like Vishnu; And at dusk, as you sit before the *Dhuni*, you appear as Shiva (the destroyer of Cupid). (11)

Such *Leelas* of the Trinity, manifested in you, are experienced by us daily, O Baba Sai! (12)

Even when such is the case, my mind wanders idly. Now this is my request to you, Baba, make it steady. (13)

The vilest of the viles, and a great sinner, I take refuge at your feet. Please ward off the three-fold afflictions of Das Ganu. (14)

108. Be it so. To expiate the deadly sins, people take recourse to the waters of the Ganga. But Ganga herself resorts to the feet of the saints for washing away her own sins.

109. Leaving the sacred feet, it is not necessary to go on pilgrimage to Ganga-Godavari. Listen to the sweet life and praises of Saint Sai with devotion.

110. Just as by good fortune, Namdev was found by Gonai in Bhimarathi river and Kabir in a mother-of-pearl shell by Tamal in Bhagirathi river,

111. in the same manner, Sree Sainath appeared for the sake of his devotees in the village of Shirdi, under a neem tree[13], at the young age of sixteen.

112. When he appeared, at that time itself, he was a realised person. Even in dreams he had no passions. He had kicked away and discarded worldly passions and *Mukti* [14] was, as it were, decorating his feet like anklets.

113. No one knew where, or in which pious family, or of which parents, Baba was born.

114. No one knew of his antecedents and people were at their wits' end trying to find out who his parents were.

115. Leaving behind mother, father, relatives, kin and kith and caste, in fact all worldly ties, he appeared in Shirdi for the good of the people.

116. One old woman of Shirdi, the mother of Nana Chopdar, has been telling the mysterious and wonderous life of Baba.

117. So says she: In the beginning this young lad, fair, handsome and charming was first visible under the *neem* tree sitting quiet and cross legged.

118. Seeing the form of that beautiful child, people were extremely surprised to find him performing hard penance at a tender age and for whom sun and shade were the same.

119. This state at a tender age amazed all the villagers, who came from far and wide, to have the *darshan* of the boy.

120. He kept no company during the day; and in the night he was never scared. From where has such a young child appeared, everyone wondered.

121. He was very handsome. At the very sight of him, people felt attracted towards him. He did not reside in anybody's house or go to anybody's doorstep. Day and night he was found under the *neem* tree.

122. Everyone was throughly amazed at the boy, so tender of age and so good-looking, who lived in the open, day and night.

123. Everyone was wonderstruck that the boy outwardly looked like a child, but in his deeds was greater than the greatest; and, he was the incarnation of non-attachment.

124. One day, a strange thing happened. Lord Khandoba possessed the bodies of a few persons who started roving around and people started asking questions.

125. "Who are the fortunate parents of this little boy? and how and whence has he come here? Lord Khandoba at least you find out". This was the same question from all.

126. The deity replied: "Go bring a pick-axe and dig at the place which I show you. You will come to know the whereabouts of the boy. Strike the pick-axe at this place".

127. Then, near the border of the village, under that very *neem* tree, after digging repeatedly, they found bricks at that spot.

128. When they came to the end of the layer of bricks and moved aside the lower half of the grinding-stone, which blocked the entrance, they saw an underground cavern in which four *Samai*'s (tall brass lamps) were burning.

129. The cavern was paved with limestone all round in which were a flat wooden seat shaped like the cow's face and a beautiful rosary. And the deity said, " This is where the boy did penance for twelve years".

130. All the people were surprised and asked the boy probing questions. But the boy was highly mischievous and told them altogether a different story.

131. He said: "This is the place of my Guru. This holy place is my inheritance. I request you to maintain it as it is".

132. So said Baba and people listened to him. But why does my tongue utter that whatever Baba said was not the right thing?

133. I am astonished at myself as to why I should hold this opinion about Baba. But now I have understood that it must have been said lightly to put the people off the scent.

134. Baba was humourous by nature. The cavern may have been his own abode. But what does it matter if he attributed it to his Guru! The importance does not diminish.

135. So be it. As per Baba's orders, the cavern was closed up by replacing the bricks, as he had said that it was his Guru's abode.

136. As the *ashwatha* and the *audumbur*[15] trees are important, so was the *neem* tree important for Baba. He loved it very much and held it in high esteem.

137. Mhalsapati and others, who were the old residents of Shirdi, used to bow down at that place, believing it to be the Samadhi-sthan of Baba's Guru.

138. Near the *Samadhi*, by observing twelve years of silence, Baba had done penance. This became well known.

139. Sathe Saheb, one of Baba's devotees, acquired the surrounding land near the *Samadhi* and the *neem* tree, and constructed a building with verandahs on all the four sides.

140. This is the same building and the same *wada*, which was the original central meeting place of the pilgrims, which was always crowded and there was a lot of hustle and bustle there.

141. When Sathe built a platform round the *neem* tree and an upper floor South-North, he indicated this underground cell when the staircase was laid.

142. Under the staircase, facing South, is a beautiful niche, opposite which is the platform, where the devotees sit facing the North.

143. "On Thursdays and Fridays, after sunset, anyone who smears the ground with cowdung and burns incense, even for a moment, will be blessed by God".

144. Perhaps the listeners in their hearts may suspect this statement to be an exaggeration and question the truth of it. But these are the very words of Baba and I have heard them coming from the mouth of Baba.

145. This statement is not fabricated by me. Do not have the least doubt about it. Those who have heard it directly are still alive to bear testimony to it.

146. Later on, Dixit's *wada* was built which housed larger families. In a short time thereafter, a stone *wada* was built there.

147. From the very beginning, Dixit was known as a man of spiritual merit and was the very incarnation of devotion. He had gone on a tour of England, where the seed of his own devotion was sown.

148. At this stage, the listeners may question how, leaving aside Mathura-Kashi-Dwarka, England which follows other religions, can be instrumental in showing the way to the ultimate Truth.

149. The listeners will naturally doubt. When it is clarified they will be surprised. I hope all will pardon me if I digress a little.

150. He had already accumulated enough religious merit by his pilgrimages to Kashi, Prayag, Badrikedar, Mathura, Brindavan and Dwarka.

151. Moreover, due to the good deeds of his father, his rare good fortune, the outcome of the good deeds of his past births, that he got the privilege of Sai's darshan.

152. The root cause of the *darshan* was the fate to be lame, due to a fall in England, when he was there.

153. Although outwardly it looked like an evil conjunction, the outcome was a good omen,[16] because it was fruitful and gave the opportunity to have an association with Sai, which is rare.

154. He happened to meet Chandorkar and heard about the fame of Sai. Chandorkar said if Sai granted him his grace, the lameness would disappear immediately.

155. But Dixit did not consider his lameness as a shortcoming. The deficiencies of his mind were what he asked Sai to remove.

156. What is the transient human frame but a collection of skin, blood, flesh and bones which is but a means for functioning in the material world. It does not matter if the leg remains lame.

157. It was on the second of November 1909 that Dixit met Sai for the first time and had a meritorious and purifying *darshan*.

158. Later on, in the same year, in the month of December he went again to Shirdi for another darshan and thought of staying on.

159. He first thought of disposing off some twenty-five shares of his to build a tin shed which would be useful also to the pilgrims.

160. Later on he decided to build a *wada* and find the auspicious day for the laying of the foundation stone, in the following year.

161. On the nineth of December, he took Baba's permission and considered that very day to be an auspicious one, for laying the foundation stone.

162. Dixit's brother, who otherwise would not have come even after an invitation, had arrived on that very day for the auspicious muhurat.

163. Dadasaheb Khaparde[17] had already come there alone. He felt awkward to ask Baba for permission to return home.

164. But on the tenth of December, Khaparde was allowed to leave Shirdi and Dikshit to lay the foundation – both these permissions were given on that day.

165. Another important event took place on this day. The bed-time *arati* at the *Chavadi* was started on this day, with great love and faith.

166. Later on, in 1911, the auspicious day of *Ramnavami* the house-occupying ceremony was accomplished according to the usual rites.

167. Later, the rich Butti's imposing building was also built on which a lot of money was spent. But this money was proved to have been well utilised for Baba was laid to rest there.

168. Now there were three *wadas* where there was none before. But initially, it was Sathe's *wada* which was very useful for everybody.

169. This *wada*[18] has also another significance, for on this spot of land Baba had raised a garden of flowers with his own hands.

170. The story of this garden will be briefly related in the next chapter. Hemad, along with the listeners, rests his head at the feet of Sai.

171. Waman Tatya supplied him with mud pots with which the great Sai watered the garden which blossomed on a barren land. Thereafter Sai disappeared.

172. Later Chand Patil met him near Aurangabad and Sai accompanied him to Shirdi along with the marriage party.

173. Later he met Devidas; got acquainted with Jankidas; and, Gangagir also came to his attention. The trio thus met at Shirdi.

174. Then followed the wrestling bout with Mohideen after which he moved into the *Masjid*. Then he developed attachment for Dengle and the people started gathering around.

175 These are the stories and anecdotes which will be told in the next chapter. Now Hemad surrenders to Sai and prostrates before him, with singleness of heart.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the fourth Chapter "The Appearance of Sai Samartha" of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes:

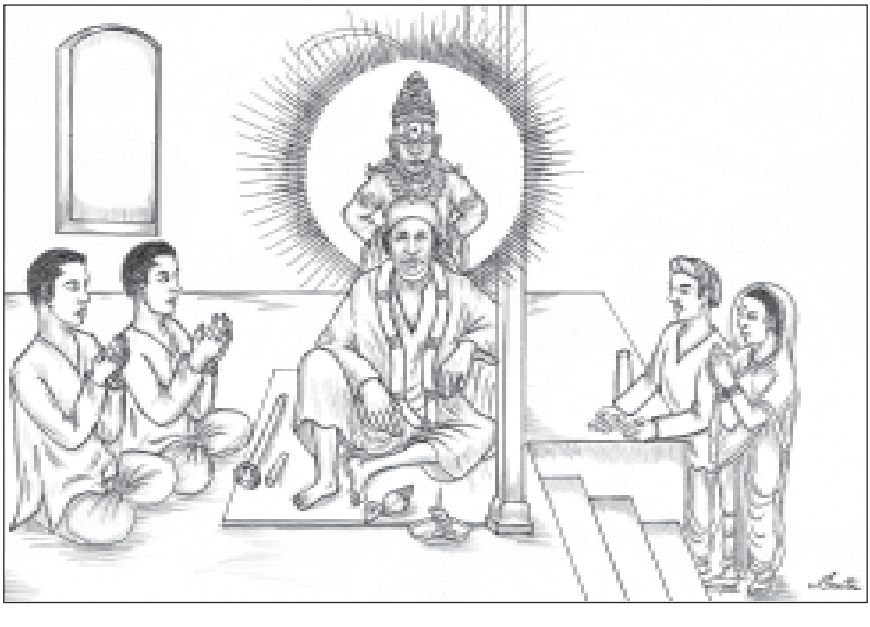
1. *Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheskika, Mimamsa* and *Vedanta.*
2. Holy places connected with Lord Dutta, Narasimha Saraswati and Gondavalekar Maharaj respectively.
3. Another name for Godavari.
4. Horse drawn small vehicle.
5. The maternal home.
6. The celebrated warrior on the side of the Kauravas, though he was actually

the eldest brother of the Pandavas. His identity was hidden from all. He was the epitome of generosity.

7. Females dedicated to God Khandoba.
8. Four religious stages of a Brahmin's life-*Brahmacharya*, *Grahastha*, *Vanaprastha* and *Sanyas*.
9. Self-realised Soul.
10. Student who is desirous of knowledge of experience and is ready to undergo hardship for it.

10. a)+b) Places connected with Vishnu and Shiva respectively.

11. The ordinary policeman who became a *kirtankar*, a poet saint and author.
12. Fruits, flowers, milk and other choice eatables offered with worship.
13. Margosa tree.
14. Salvation.
15. *Ashwatha:* Buddha found his realisation under it; *Audumbur* has its link with Lord Dutta.
16. As auspicious as the conjunction of the planets Guru and *Prushya*.
17. Devotee from Bombay about whom more appears later.
18. Butti's *wada*.



After the seventh day of the chanting, Baba's words came true and it is said that Das Ganu had *darshan* of Lord Vitthal at Shirdi. Thus Baba's prediction was experienced and verified. (Ch.4, ovi 88)

5
The Re-appearance of Sree Sai

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Now to continue the story from the previous chapter... Baba disappeared from Shirdi and reappeared with Chand Patil. Listen to how all this happened.
2. How Baba created and tended the garden by himself watering it; of the gathering of Gangagir and other saints. Listening to this narration will be sanctifying.
3. Later on, Baba who had disappeared for some time, how this gem of a person returned to Shirdi in the *Barat* [1] of a Muslim.
4. Before that, Devidas had taken up residence at Shirdi and later Jankidas, the ascetic, also came there.
5. How all this happened, I will recount in detail. Listeners, listen to it attentively and with respect.
6. In a small village called Dhoop, in the district of Aurangabad, there was a fortunate Muslim, whose name was Chand Patil.
7. While he was travelling to Aurangabad, he lost one of his mares and there was no trace of her for two months. He lost all hope.
8. Patil became completely despondent and was greatly distressed by the loss of the mare. Carrying the saddle on his back, he began his return journey.
9. Leaving Aurangabad four and half *kos*[2] behind, he came across, on the way a mango tree, underneath which he saw this gem.
10. Wearing a cap on his head and a *kafni* on his body, a wooden stick under his arm, crushing tobacco and preparing it for filling his *chillum* for a smoke – when a strange thing happened.
11. As Chand Patil was passing by, he heard the fakir calling out to him: "Come along here, have a smoke and then proceed further. Sit

for a while in the shade".

12. The fakir asked him what was the saddle for and Patil answered that he had lost his mare. Then he told him "Go and search for it near the stream". The horse was found immediately.

13. Chand Patil was wonderstruck and thought to himself that he had met an *aulia* [3] 'There is no limit to his powers. He cannot be called an ordinary being'.

14. Afterwards Patil returned with the mare to the original place. The fakir made him sit next to him. He then picked up in his hands a pair of tongs.

15. Then he thrust it into the soil there, took out a burning coal and put it on his *chillum* [4] which was in his hands. Then he picked up his *satka* [5].

16. Next, there was no water around to wet the *chappi* [6] for his chillum, so he beat the *satka* on the ground and water began to spring.

17. The *chappi* was soaked in the water and then squeezed dry. He wound it around the *chillum*. He smoked it himself and made Patil smoke too. Patil was dazed.

18. He made a request to the fakir to sanctify his house by his presence; and the fakir, who had manifested himself only for such divine *leelas*, obliged him.

19. He went to the village the next day, stayed with Patil for some time; and, then, returned to Shirdi.

20. This Chand Patil, *Karbhari*, was the headman of the village. A marriage was arranged with a girl from Shirdi, for his wife's nephew.

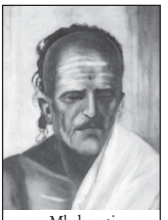
21. It was fortunate that an alliance with the bride from Shirdi was fixed for the nephew of Chandbhai's wife, who had become of a marriageable age.

22. Along with carts and horses the marriage procession started for Shirdi. Out of love for Chandbhai, Baba also joined in the procession.

23. The marriage was over and the marriage party returned. Only Baba stayed behind and stayed on for good. Thus Shirdi became blessed.

24. Sai - the Eternal, the Ancient One, was neither Hindu nor Muslim. He had no caste, nor family, nor *gotra*. Know him to be the Self-Realised Soul.

25. People called him 'Sai, Sai'. How was this name given to him? "Welcome Sai", is the reverence, with which he was welcomed and that is how this name remained.


Mhalsapati

26. Near Khandoba's temple, in Mhalsapati's threshing ground, when Baba alighted with the marriage party, on that day, he was given this name.

27. Originally, the threshing ground belonged to Mhalsapati. Later on, it belonged to Aminbhai. When the marriage procession came, it was here that it halted under the banyan tree.

28. The bullocks were unyoked at the threshing ground, in the extensive open space in front of Khandoba's temple. Baba, along with the marriage guests, alighted there.

29. When the youthful fakir got down from the cart, and was first seen by Bhagat (Mhalsapati), he went forward to him saying 'Welcome Sai'. Since then he has been called by that name.

30. Later on from that time, everybody called him 'Sai, Sai'. And that became his proper name.

31. He smoked his *chillum* there, resided in the *Masjid*, enjoyed the company of Devidas, and felt happy in Shirdi.

32. Sometimes he would sit in the *Chavadi*, sometimes in Devidas' company, sometimes in the Maruti temple, absorbed completely in the Self.

33. This Devidas was already living in Shirdi before Baba came there. Later came the Sage Jankidas of the Mahanubhav sect[8].

34. With that Jankidas, Maharaj would sit and chat; or, Jankidas would come where Maharaj used to sit.

35. Both were fond of each other and would meet regularly. Their kinship developed and pleased everybody greatly.

36. Similarly, a very famous Vaishnava householder-saint, called Gangagir, who hailed from Puntambe was a frequent visitor to Shirdi.

37. Great was Gangagir's surprise in the early days when he would see Sai carrying water from the well, in earthen pitchers, in both his hands.

38. When he first set eyes on Sai, Buva openly proclaimed: "It is the good fortune of Shirdi that this precious gem has associated itself with Shirdi.

39. "Although he is carrying water on his shoulders to-day, he is not an ordinary person. Blessed is the soil of Shirdi on which he has set his foot".

40. Similarly, another well-known saint, named Anandnath, had predicted for him that he would perform miraculous deeds.

41. This famous Anandnath had established a *math* in Yeola. He came to Shirdi once, along with some of the dwellers of Shirdi.[9]

42. Anandnath, who was the disciple of the great saint of Akkalkot when he saw Sai, exclaimed: "This is indeed a diamond, a real diamond.

43. Though to-day he is lying on the garbage heap (i.e. neglected), it is not just a flint but a diamond". These were the words of Anandnath when Baba was a youngster.

44. "Mark my words carefully. Later on you will recall them". After prophesying thus, he returned to Yeola.

45. Those were the days of his youth, when Sai did not shave his head but grew his hair long and dressed like a wrestler.

46. Whenever Baba would go to Rahata, he would bring saplings of marigold and jasmine. He planted them in barren land and regularly watered them.

47. Waman Tatya, a devotee, regularly supplied two unbaked earthen pots to Baba to water the plants with his own hands.

48. Baba would carry the water on his shoulders from the tank near the well; and, at sunset would keep the pots at the base of the neem tree.

49. No sooner were they kept on the ground, they would break on the spot; and early next morning, Tatya would bring new ones for him.

50. An oven-baked pot is more durable. But Baba required only the unbaked and new. So without undergoing the trouble of baking, the potter would sell the pots.

51. For three years this continued and the wilderness was transformed into a garden. This is the place on which stands the *wada* to-day which provides the devotees, a place for close association with him.[10]

52. Here[11], under the neem tree, a devotee named Bhai[12] installed the *Padukas* of Akkalkot Swami, for worship by devotees.

53. Swami Samartha of Akkalkot was the chosen deity of Bhai, who worshipped his portrait regularly with devotion.

54. He thought of going to Akkalkot to have the darshan of the *Padukas* and to offer worship to them with his heart and soul.

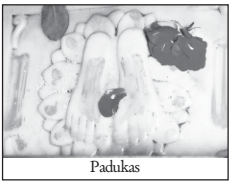
55. He got ready to start from Bombay the next day. But that decision remained unfulfilled and instead, he left for Shirdi.

56. One day before his departure he saw a vision. Akkalkot Swami commanded him: "At present Shirdi is my abode. You go there".

57. Obeying the command with reverence, Bhai left Bombay. He lived in Shirdi for six months and was at peace and happy.

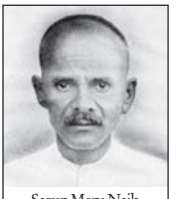
58. Bhai was full of devotion. So, to commemorate the visions he installed the Swami's *Padukas* under the neem tree.

59. In *Shake* 1834[13], in the bright half of the month of *Shravan*, on an auspicious day, the *Padukas* were installed under the neem tree with the singing of *bhajans* and with great devotion.


Padukas

60. At the auspicious *mahurat*,[14] the installation ceremony was done by Dada Kelkar, while the rites and rituals were performed by Upasani[15] according to the *Shastras*.

61. For the future, arrangements were entrusted to a *Brahmin* named Dixit[16] who would perform the puja and a devotee by the name Sagun[17] looked after the management. This is the story of the *Padukas*.


Sagun Meru Naik

62. Such are the unaffected saints, who are truly incarnations of God, and appear on earth for the salvation and benefit of mankind.

63. Some days later, a strange thing happened. Listeners who listen with respect, will marvel about it.

64. There was a seller of beetle-leaves by the name of Mohideen Bhai. A dispute arose between him and Baba which flared up into a wrestling bout.

65. Both were skilled wrestlers but destiny prevails over strength. Mohideen proved stronger. Baba being weaker lost.

66. After this, he took a decision. Baba completely changed his attire. He put on a *kafni* and tied a loin cloth. He also wrapped a piece of cloth around his head.

67. He used a gunny bag or sack for his seat and also as his bedding. He wore torn and worn-out rags and was content with them.

68. Sai would always say: "Poverty is better than Kingship, far better than riches. The Lord is the befriender of the poor".

69. Gangagir also passed through the same phase. He was very fond of gymnastics. Once while engaged in a wrestling bout, he also had a similar feeling of dispassion.

70. At the opportune moment, he heard the words of a realised person: "One must realise that the body should be serving God and should wear out in the service of God".

71. While still engaged in wrestling, he heard these words of grace.

Because of them, he discarded the worldly life and sought the path of spirituality.

72. Near Puntambe, on an island in the middle of the river, stands Buva's math, where some of his disciples also stayed to serve him.

73. Enough about him. Later on, Sainath only answered questions put to him and would never talk to anybody on his own.

74. During the day, he would sit under the neem tree; and, sometimes, under the shade of a protruding branch of the Babul tree by the side of a stream, near the outskirts of the village.

75. Sometimes he would wander about at his pleasure during the day, or in the afternoon or in the early evening, near Nimgaon, a mile or so away.

76. The famous family of Trimbak Dengle had the Jagirdari[19] of Nimgaon. Babasaheb Dengle from that family was dearly loved by Baba.

77. Whenever Baba took a round of Nimgaon, he would go to his home and with great affection spend the day talking with him.

78. He had a younger brother whose name was Nanasaheb. He had no son, so he was very dejected.

79. There was no possibility of a child from his first wife. Therefore, he married for the second time. Still fate could not be altered. One cannot fathom destiny!

80. Later Babasaheb sent him for Sai *darshan*. And with Sai's blessings, he received the *Prasad* in the form of a son.

81. As time went by, multitudes thronged to have the *darshan* of Sai. Sai's fame increased and the news reached Ahmednagar.

82. There, Nana[20] moved in the Government circles and was influential with the officials among whom was Chidambar Keshav, the Secretary to the District Collector,

83. to whom he sent a letter, saying that the great Sai is worthy of *darshan*; and that he should have *darshan* bringing along with him his wife, son and family friends.

84. One after another, thus many people started pouring into Shirdi. As Baba's fame spread, so also his circle of devotees increased.

85. Although he was not in need of company, he was surrounded by devotees during the day. But after sunset he would retire in the dilapidated *Masjid*.

86. With *chillum*, tobacco and a tumbler, he always kept a *satka* near

him. He wore a *kafni* reaching upto his ankles and a white piece of cloth round his head.

87. He would tie around his head a white cloth, which was washed, and artistically twisted behind his left ear, like matted locks of hair.

88. Dressed thus, he would go at times without a bath for eight days at a stretch and walked bare-footed. He only sat on the gunny bag cloth.

89. His seat was always a piece of sacking. He did not know what a bolster was! How could there be any proper bedding or grandeur?

90. During those days that old sack-cloth was his favourite seat. It always remained there for all the twenty-four hours.

91. That was the only seat and the bed. He wore a *kaupin* [21] tied at the waist and had no other garment. Only the *dhuni* was there to ward off the cold.

92. Baba would sit cross-legged, facing South, with his left arm resting on the railing in the *Masjid*, gazing intently into the *dhuni* in front of him.

93. Along with ego and passion, all kinds of desires were offered as oblation; and, also, worldly aspirations were thrown into the *dhuni*, by different ways and means.

94. In this manner, he fed the log of the pride of knowledge in the brightly burning fire and also repeated 'Allah Malik', thus keeping the banner of the Lord's name flying high.

95. And how big was that *Masjid* ? The whole place was the size of two rooms[22] in which he sat, lived, slept and received all visitors.

96. The mattress and the cushion are a recent feature when devotees began gathering around him. In the early days one could not go near him without fear.

97. It was from 1912 that the change came over. The renovation of the *Masjid* actually started since then.

98. There were knee-deep pits in the flooring of the *Masjid*. But because of the faith of the devotees the flooring was paved with *Shahabadi* (hewn) stones one night.

99. Before moving into the *Masjid*, Baba stayed at the *takia* [23]. He stayed there long, peacefully and untroubled by anyone.

100. Here, tying jingling bells around his feet, he would dance gracefully and sing melodiously with devotion to the accompaniment of a tambourine.

101. In the early days, the great Sai was very fond of burning oil lamps.

Therefore, he himself used to go to the shopkeepers and ask for oil.

102. Carrying a tumbler-like container in his hand, he begged for oil from the shops of the grocers and oil-mongers. After bringing it he would fill the earthern oil lamps.

103. He burnt the lamps brightly in the temples and the *Masjid*. This continued for sometime.

104. Out of love for the worship of the light, he even celebrated *Deepavali* with illumination. He would make twisted wicks from rags and would burn the lamps in the *Masjid*.

105. He brought the oil, daily, free of charge. Therefore, the oil-mongers conspired against him to put an end to this nuisance.

106. Later, when Baba went to ask for oil as usual, and when all refused, look what a wonder took place.

107. Baba went back without a word and put the dry wicks in the earthern lamps. What could he do without the oil? The grocers watched that fun!

108. Baba picked up a pot, which was on the parapet of the *Masjid*, in which there was little oil, not enough even to light the evening lamp.

109. Then he put water into the oil and Baba drank it. Thus having offered it to Brahman, he took pure water.

110. Then he poured the water in the lamps and soaked the dry wicks completely; struck the matchsticks and lit the lamps for all to see.

111. Seeing the lamps burning with water, the grocers were dumbfounded. They felt disgusted with themselves that they had lied to Baba.

112. Even though there was not a drop of oil, the lamps burnt throughout the night. People started commenting that the shopkeepers had now lost Sai's grace.

113. The grocers felt repentant for having harassed Baba (causing him anguish without any reason) and having committed the sin of uttering lies. They thought how great is Baba's power!

114. Baba never thought of this. He was never angry or hated any person. He had no friends or foes, and all creatures were equal for him.

115. So be it. We will continue with the former episode – Mohideen's victory in the wrestling bout. Further, the life story is very interesting. Please listen attentively.

116. Five years after the wrestling bout, a fakir called Jawahar Ali of Ahmednagar came to reside in Rahata along with his disciple.

117. Finding an open place near the temple of Veerabhadra, the fakir camped there. This fakir was very fortunate.

118. If he were not fortunate how could he have acquired a delightful disciple like Sai, whose fame had already spread?

119. There were many kinds of people in the village. Amongst them were also quite a few Marathas. Out of them was one Bhagu Sadaphal, who became his servitor.

120. The fakir was a great scholar. He knew the *Quran Sharif*[24] like the palm of his hand. Many selfish people, genuine devotees and those desirous of *parmartha* [25], all alike, started worshipping him.

121. He started the construction of *Idgah* [26]. After some time he was charged with having defiled Veerabhadra.

122. Later the construction of the *Idgah* was stopped. The fakir was driven out of the village. He then came to Shirdi and stayed at the *Masjid* with Baba.

123. The fakir was a very sweet-tongued person. The whole village started worshipping him. The way he behaved with Baba, the people said that he had hypnotised Baba and bewitched him.

124. "Be my disciple", so said the fakir. Baba being of a sporting nature agreed to it. The fakir was pleased and took Baba along with him.

125. He got an obedient disciple like Baba. Jawahar Ali became the Guru. Both of them together decided to stay on in Rahata.

126. The Guru was not aware of the accomplishments of the disciple. But the disciple knew the shortcomings of the Guru. But, he never showed any disrespect and fulfilled the duties of a disciple.

127. He did not consider the propriety or impropriety of the Guru's orders, but carried them out meticulously. He did even the menial duties for the Guru such as carrying water.

128. And so continued the service of the Guru. The visits to Shirdi became occasional. When this happened, I will tell you what followed.

129. This went on awhile. He started residing in Rahata only. People thought he had left Shirdi and had completely gone under the fakir's control.

130. People thought that Jawahar Ali had captured Sai with his own yogic powers. But Sai's attitude was different. He wanted to destroy the bodily pride.

131. People will conjecture 'Where was there any pride in Sai?' But this behaviour was for the sake of the people, to set an example and this is exactly the purpose of his *avatar*.

132. There were many loving devotees of Baba in Shirdi, who were greatly attached to Baba, and they thought it improper to stay away from Baba.

133. But Sai had completely surrendered to him (Jawahar Ali); and the villagers were grieved over the situation. They began to seriously consider how to get him back.

134. As gold and its glitter or the lamp and its light, so is the state of complete unity between the Guru and his disciple.

135. The group of devotees from Shirdi went to Rahata near the *Idgah* to try their utmost to convince Baba to return along with them.

136. But Baba told them to the contrary. "The fakir is very hot-tempered. Do not cross swords with him. He will never leave me.

137. "You better leave from here. He will come back any moment from the village. He will abuse you. His wrath is terrible.

138. "As soon as he returns he will get red hot with rage. His rage is awful. Oh, you go, go away immediately. Set on your way to Shirdi".

139. Now what turn will take place? Baba had given an opposite viewpoint. Just then the fakir returned unexpectedly and asked them thus:

140. "Have you come for the lad? What were you talking about here? You have a design to take him back to Shirdi? But don't take the trouble".

141. Even though he spoke so in the beginning, he yielded to the pressure of the villagers and said why not take me along and we will take the lad with us.

142. So the fakir also went along with them. He could not leave Baba and Baba also could not part from him. No one could understand how this happened.

143. Sai was the Incarnation of the Supreme Brahman. But Jawahar Ali was a fake. Devidas tested him and the cat was out of the bag in Shirdi.

144. Devidas had a good physique, lustrous eyes and attractive looks. He was ten or eleven years old when he first came to Shirdi.

145. At that tender age, with a loin-cloth round his waist, he came as a pilgrim and stayed in the Maruti temple.

146. Appa Bhil and Mhalsapati were his regular visitors. Kashiram[27] and others would give him alms. Thus his fame spread.

147. Twelve years before Baba came with the marriage party, Devidas had come and settled in Shirdi.

148. Appa Bhil was taught to write on the slate and made to learn the *Venkatesh Stotra*. Everybody was also made to learn it by heart. These lessons were taken regularly.

149. Devidas was very learned. Tatyaba[28] regarded him as his Guru. Kashinath and others became his foremost disciples and worshipped him.

150. The fakir (Jawahar Ali) was brought before Devidas and a debate regarding the *shastras* took place. The *Bairagi* (Devidas) won over the fakir and the fakir was driven away from there.

151. After he escaped from there, he stayed at Vaijapur. Later, he returned after many years and bowed down to Sainath.

152. The misconcept was cleared up that 'I am the Guru and Sai the *chela*'[29]. Baba accepted him as before, since he had repented and was purified.

153. Such were the inscrutable ways of Baba. Till the time the fakir's illusion vanished, when it was destined to, Sai played upto it.

154. Sainath honoured the concept of the teacher and student relationship by practising it himself. He let him cherish his status as a teacher and accepted his own status as a student.

155. We should belong to somebody or somebody should belong to oneself. Anything different from this is not right. Without this the worldly ocean cannot be crossed.

156. This is the only lesson learnt from his behaviour. It is rare to find such confidence, intrepidity and courage. One who can follow this example, he will attain the acme of humility.

157. In such matters, ingenuity and intelligence are of no use. One who wants to achieve his own good should behave without pride.

158. He who has burnt away his bodily pride is the person who alone has used his body for its proper purpose. To achieve the ultimate good, he may then become anybody's follower or disciple.

159. The young and the old were amazed to see this dispassionate state of mind in a boy so young and fair. All the people adored him and marvelled at him.

160. The actions of a realised person happen according to his past *karma* but they are not a burden to him. He does not become the actual doer.

161. Just as the sun cannot stay in darkness, so the man of enlightenment

cannot remain in a state of duality. For him the whole universe is the incarnation of his own self. He dwells in unity (*advaita*).

162. This story of Guru and his disciple's behaviour was narrated by Mhalsapati, a great devotee of Sainath. I have narrated it from beginning to end, as I heard it from him.

163. Let us end the narration now. The next one is more profound. It will be narrated in the proper sequence. Please listen with attention.

164. What was the earlier condition of the *Masjid*; with what difficulty it was paved; and, whether Sai was a Hindu or a Muslim – no one knows this for a certainty.

165. In the next chapter will come a detailed narration in its proper order, of Baba's yogic practices such as *dhotipoti* [30] and *khandyoga* [31] and his taking upon himself the *karmic* sufferings of the devotees.

166. Hemad surrenders to Sai. This narration of his life story is due to his grace only; and listening to this meritious and holy tale will remove the ignorance.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the fifth chapter "The Re-appearance of Sree Sai" of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita* written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people.

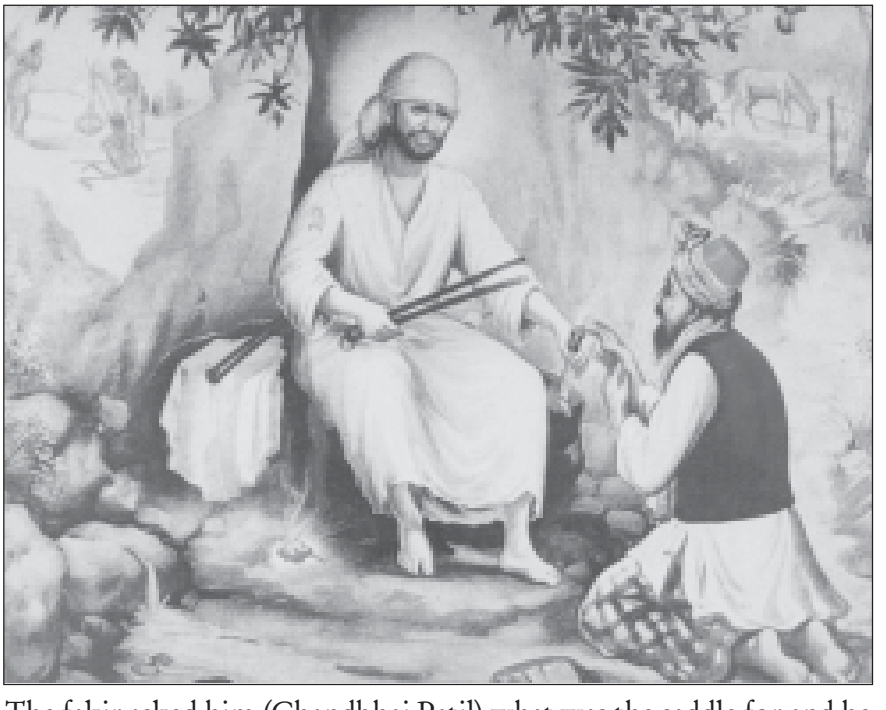
This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes:

1. Marriage party going in procession to the groom's or bride's residence.
2. One '*kos*' is equal to about too miles.
3. Sage.
4. The bowl of a hukka in which tobacco is placed.
5. Baton – it is the practice of ascetics to carry such a baton, especially if they belong to the Navanaths group.
6. Strip of cloth.
7. Kindred.
8. Very strict, rigid and learned.
9. Who had gone to Yeola, for Anandnath's *darshan*. They were Madhavrao Balwant Deshpande, Nandram Shivram Marwadi and Bhagchand Marwadi. It is said that Anandnath Maharaj unexpectedly and forcibly joined them on their bullock cart, going to Shirdi. This Anandnath originally hailed from South Konkan District, and belonged to the Kudaldeshkar Gowda Brahmin sect. He had lived for a fairly long time in Bombay also.
10. Butti's *wada*, which is the Samadhi mandir.
11. Closeby.
12. Bhai Krishnaji Alibagkar.
13. AD 1912.

14. Hour – chosen astrologically.
15. Kashinath Govind Upasani Maharaj of Sakori.
16. Govind Kamlakar Dixit.
17. Sagun Meru Naik.
18. Detailed story is given in Sai Leela Volume II, Number I, Page 25.
19. An assignment by Government, of lands or revenues. This may be for maintenance of troops for public service or for the support of an individual or family.
20. Chandorkar.
21. *Langoti* or loin cloth.
22. Size of the rooms was not larger than the space between two columns or cross-beams.
23. Place for fakirs to stay. To-day, (1944), devotees wait in that area before participating in the Abhishek.
24. The holy book of the Muslims.
25. Spiritual knowledge.
26. Wall to mark off a place of prayer.
27. Shimpi, the tailor.
28. Tatya Ganpat (Patil) Kote.
29. Disciple.
30. Cleaning of internal organs.
31. Severing and re-assembling organs of the body at will.



The fakir asked him (Chandbhai Patil) what was the saddle for and he answered that he had lost his mare. Then he told him "Go and search for it near the stream". The horse was found immediately. (Ch.5, ovi 12)

Khandoba Mandir, Shirdi

When the youthful fakir got down from the cart, and was first seen by Bhagat (Mhalsapati), he went forward to him saying 'Welcome Sai'. Since then he has been called by that name. (Ch.5, ovi 29)

6
The Narration of the Story of Ram-janam Celebrations

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Whether in the worldly or spiritual life, whenever the *Sadguru* is the captain of the ship, he will steer the ship along with the passengers to the opposite bank.
2. The very word *Sadguru* immediately brings to mind Sai, as he stands in front of me and blesses with his hand on the head.
3. As soon as the boon-giving hand, which has the *udi* from the *dhuni* [1], touches my head, my heart goes into a rapture with inner happiness and my eyes brim over with love.
4. How marvellous is the touch of the hand of the Guru which has the power to destroy the subtle body, which is burnt to ashes at the touch of the hand – the subtle body which otherwise cannot be burnt even by the inferno at the dissolution of the world.
5. It can even steady the minds of those, who are annoyed even by an accidental mention of God or by His tales, and speak intemperately.
6. As soon as he puts his lotus-like hand on the head, the accumulated sins of many previous births are washed off and the loving devotees of Sai are purified.
7. Having seen the comely features, you are choked with extreme bliss; tears of happiness roll down and the heart is overwhelmed with '*ashta satvik bhava*' [2].
8. He awakens the thought of oneness, the inner happiness reveals itself, it dissipates the two-fold nature because of the oneness with God and evenly spreads unity.
9. When one starts reading the sacred books and the *puranas*, the *Sadguru* comes to one's mind at every step. Sai is Rama and Krishna and makes us listen to his own life-story.

10. When listening to the *Bhagvat (puran),* Krishna himself becomes the embodiment of Sai, singing the praises of Uddhava[3] for the good of his devotees.
11. Even in casual conversation, incidents and stories of Sai's life unexpectedly are recalled to illustrate a point.
12. Intent on writing, when you take up paper and pen in hand, words elude you; but when he makes us write at his command, it becomes difficult to cope with the flow of the words.
13. The moment ego raises its head, he immediately suppresses it. And by creating the awareness of higher consciousness, he brings to the disciple a sense of fulfilment.
14. When you surrender to the powerful Sai - body and soul, virtue, wealth, love and deliverance are attained without striving and unasked.
15. The four-fold path of *Karma* (Action), *Jñyana* (Knowledge), *Yoga* (Yogic Powers) and *Bhakti* (Devotion), though each is distinct from the other, all lead to the same goal.
16. The path of *Bhakti* is the thorny path, like the path through the prickly *Babul* forest. It is full of pits and potholes. One or two steps, in the right direction, takes you really close to God.
17. You should avoid the thorns and step forward. You will reach the destination without fear. This is the only remedy, says the *Guru-mayi* very clearly.
18. When the orchard of the mind is watered by devotion, detachment will grow, knowledge will blossom, union with the Supreme Spirit comes to fruition and joy will burst forth, avoiding the cycle of birth and death, as a certainty.
19. The primeval Supreme Soul is self-existent. It is the three-fold concept, *Sat-chit-anand* (Truth, Consciousness and Bliss). It appears by transformation, in the visual image; and, actually, manifests for the sake of the devotees.
20. As *Brahman* became manifest through its three-fold attributes, *Maya* became active and stirring *Satva* (Righteousness) *Rajas* (Activity) *Tamas* (Inertia) exhibited her qualities.
21. When a particular shape is given to clay, it is called a pot rightfully; but when the pot breaks, it loses its name, form and identity.
22. The whole world is born of *Maya* and both are cause and effect to each other. Thus *Maya* itself manifests, as it were, with different limbs in the form of the world.

23. If you look at the nature of *Maya*, before the existence of the world, nothing is apparent. She was dormant in the Supreme Consciousness, though residing in it she was not perceivable.

24. Even if perceivable, it is actually the Supreme Self. When it is not perceivable, then also it is the Supreme Self. Thus *Maya* is the Supreme Self. It cannot be distinguishable from the Supreme Self.

25. In the beginning *Maya* created lifeless, immovable static objects from the inertia quality and completed the first part of her action.

26. Afterwards, when the Supreme Self was conjoint with the '*rajoguna*' of *Maya*, it revealed the mine of percipience of essential activities, endowed with the aspects of both.

27. Later on, out of the *satvaguna* of *Maya,* was created the intellect, which when combined with the divine bliss of the Supreme Self completed the whole process of creation.

28. Thus, *Maya*, susceptible to great modifications, till she is motivated towards activity, does not create the things which are above mentioned and the three *gunas* remain unmanifest.

29. *Maya* cannot be apparent unless she performs actions according to the three *gunas*. She can exist without appearance and practise non-action (passivity).

30. *Maya* is the creation of the Supreme Being, while the universe is the creation of *Maya*. 'All this is Brahman' means that the world, *Maya* and the Supreme Being are all united and one.

31. Those who keenly desire and are intent on realising this unity should refer to the *Vedas* and the *Shrutis*.

32. The *Vedas*, *Shastras*, *Shrutis*, *Smritis*, teachers and scriptures give us the knowledge, the discriminating intellect and ultimate happiness.

33. "In the home of my devotees, food and clothing will never be lacking". This is an assurance given by Sree Sai and the devotees were aware of this.

34. "Those who whole-heartedly worship me and lovingly always serve me, I look after their well-being. This I know to be my motto."

35. This is also the affirmation of the *Bhagvat Gita*. Sai says to accept this as universal truth: "There will never be shortage of food and clothing. Therefore do not hanker after them."

36. "One should seek honour at the door of God; and should beg only from God. Ask only for His Blessings; worldly prestige should be left aside.

37. "Why are you satisfied by the honour given to you by society? And

why are you infatuated by that? Rather seek through intense devotion to move your chosen deity to compassion and to express your joy through copious streams of *satvik bhava*.

38. "May you find joy in such striving. Let all the faculties be seized with such a devotional urge so that the passions of the senses may be transformed completely and sprout devotional worship. What desire will then remain?

39. "May such devotion be your constant pre-occupation leaving no relish for anything else. May the mind be engaged in constant chanting of my name and let everything else be forgotten.

40. "Then there will be no thought of body, home and wealth. The heart will be fixed on the infinite happiness. The mind will be balanced and serene, and it will find fulfilment in itself.

41. "A contented mind is the surest sign of association with the holy. How can a wandering mind be considered as being surrendered to God?"

42. Therefore, with full concentration, oh listeners, listen to the explanation with faith. By listening to the Sai Satcharita let your mind be inclined towards devotion.

43. Along with the narration, you will feel contented. Your wayward mind will find peace. Agitation will disappear and you will achieve happiness.

44. Now, we will go back to the earlier thread of the story about the renovation of the *Masjid* and the *kirtan* about the birth of Ram. Let us proceed with the narration.

45. There was one devotee by the name of Gopal Gund[4] who had great devotion for Baba. He spent his time in ceaseless chanting of Baba's name.

46. He had no children. Later with Sai's blessings he begot a son. His mind was thus happy.

47. So Gopal Gund thought of holding a *Yatra* or an Urus[5] yearly in the Shirdi village. Everybody would be joyous.

48. Tatya Kote, Dada Kote, Madhavrao and other leading devotees approved of this idea and began to make preparations.

49. But for such annual festivals, there was a certain regulation. The permission of the District Officer was required.

50. When efforts were made to secure the permission, a perverse *Kulkarni*[6] from the village went against them and put obstacles in the way.

51. When the *Kulkarni* came in the way, look what was the result. The District Officer issued an order that the *yatra* should not be held at Shirdi.

52. But to hold this *yatra* in Shirdi was also Baba's wish and he had commanded them to fulfil this along with his blessings.

53. The villagers persevered and tried their utmost. The authorities changed the earlier order and honoured the wishes of the people.

54. Since then, according to Baba's wish, the *yatra* takes place on *Ramnavami*. Tatya Kote looks after the arrangements and a large crowd gathers.

55. On *Ramnavami* day, devotional singing and worship take place to the accompaniment of drums and other wind instruments. People flock there from all four quarters in large numbers.

56. Every year, two new flags are ceremoniously carried in procession and tied to the dome of the *Masjid* and permanently fixed there.

57. Out of the two, one would be Nimonkar's[7] and the other, Damu Anna's[8]. They are taken with pomp in procession and they fly high on the top of the dome.

58. Now listen to the interesting account of how the celebration of *Ramnavami* originated from the Urus, which is unusual – the pleasure and glory of Shirdi!

59. Originating from the Urus, Ramnavami was celebrated for the first time in Shake 1833[9]; and, since then, it continues uninterruptedly to be held to this day.

60. The famous Krishna Jogeshwar Bhishma[10] was the originator of the idea of celebrating the birth of Ram, which he thought would be greatly beneficial for all.

K. J. Bhisma

61. Till then, it was only the *Urus* for which the people participated. Since that year, the beautiful festival of the birth of Ram took place.

62. Once, as Bhishma was peacefully sitting in the *wada*, and Kaka[11] was ready to leave for the *Masjid* along with the *puja* paraphernalia,

63. in his heart, he (Kaka) was thinking of *Sai-darshan* and outwardly he was enthusiastic about the *Urus*. Kaka had come a day earlier to Shirdi for the celebrations.

64. Considering it an opportune moment, Bhishma asked Kaka: "Would you give me help for a good cause that has inspired me?

65. "Here, every year, *Urus* is held on the day which is also the birth of

Ram. Therefore, this is a natural opportunity to hold the ceremony of the birth of Ram".

66. Kaka liked the idea and asked Bhishma to obtain Baba's consent. It would depend on his wish. Then, there would be no delay in the work.

67. But for the celebration, there would have to be a *Kirtan*. That was a problem – for, where would one get a *Haridas* in a small village? That was the only question.

68. Bhishma said: "I would be the *Kirtankar*[12]. You can accompany me on the harmonium. And Radhakrishnabai[13] would be prepared to make the *Sunthwada*[14] at the proper time.

69. "Come then let us go to Baba. Any delay for a good cause poses problems. A good cause accompanied by promptness will be executed efficiently.

70. "Come along, let us go and ask permission to perform the *Kirtan*". So saying, they both arrived in the *Masjid*, at that time.

71. No sooner had Kaka begun the worship, Baba on his own asked what was the discussion going on in the *wada* and Kaka could not think of an answer.

72. Immediately Baba asked Bhishma the same question in a different way. "What has Buva to say?" asked Baba of him.

73. Then Kaka remembered and disclosed the intentions. Baba liked the idea and it was decided to hold the celebrations.

74. Next day, early in the morning, seeing that Baba had gone to the Lendi[15], a cradle was put in the courtyard with ceremonial preparations for the *Kirtan*.

75. The audience assembled. Later on, Baba returned on time. Bhishma got up. Kaka sat down at the harmonium. Then Baba sent for Kaka.

76. "Baba is calling you". Hearing this, Kaka got a shock. He could not understand what had happened. Let there not be a fiasco.

77. On hearing Baba's call, Kaka became scared; "Why has Baba become so angry? Will the *kirtan* take place without any difficulty?"

78. He walked ahead casting backward glances. He climbed up the steps with fear. His steps were very timid. Kaka was extremely worried.

79. Baba asked him a question as to why the cradle was tied here and having learnt in brief the story, the reason behind it and the whole scheme, he was happy.

80. Then, from the niche[16] he took a beautiful garland and put it round

Kaka's neck and gave another for Bhishma.

81. Having heard the question about the cradle, there was anxiety all around. But when the garlands were put round the necks, everyone was at ease.

82. Bhishma was a versatile man, well-versed in narrating *kathas*. The *kirtan* was very enjoyable and all the listeners were very pleased.

83. Baba too was very pleased. According to his consent, the festival had taken place, along with *bhajan*, *kirtan* etc.

84. At the time of the birth of Ram, the red *gulal* powder[17], that was thrown about, went into Baba's eyes and Baba became enraged. He looked terrible like Narahari[18], at the hour when Rama was born in the palace of Kaushalya.

85. The '*gulal*' was just an excuse. The action implied the fervour at the birth of Ram, who would destroy the ego, in the form of Ravan, and wickedness in the form of *Rakshas*.

86. Suddenly he was annoyed. He became, as it were, Narasimha[19]. Then started abuses and curses, which were showered upon all.

87. Radhakrishnabai[20] was quite concerned, as she thought that the cradle would be broken into pieces. How can it be kept in tact? That was the difficulty she faced.

88. "Please untie, quickly untie", she was insistent. Kaka moved forward to untie the cradle.

89. Then Baba got very angry and rushed forward towards Kaka. The untying of the cradle was forgotten and Baba regained his composure.

90. When, in the afternoon, Baba's permission was sought, his answer surprised everyone. "Why should you untie the cradle in such a hurry? It is still needed".

91. What could this necessity be? Sai's words are never spoken in vain. When given thought, the realisation dawned that the festival was not yet complete.

92. The festival had progressed upto a stage. But till the dawn of next day and until the time of *Gopalkala* [21] the festival could not be said to be complete.

93. In this way, on the second day, after the *Gopalkala* and the *kirtan*, Baba gave his consent to untie the cradle.

94. Next year, Bhishma was not available. Balabuva Satarkar was to be brought for the *kirtan*. But he had to go to Kavathe[22].

95. Therefore, Balabuva Bhajani, known as the 'Modern Tukaram' was brought by Kaka Mahajani and the festival was performed at his hands.

96. Even if he (i.e. Bhajani) had not been available, Kaka would have performed the *kirtan*, because he knew by heart the composition about *Ramnavami* composed by Das Ganu.

97. In the third year, Balabuva Satarkar himself came to Shirdi in time for the occasion. Listen to that incident with respect.

98. Having heard of Sai Baba's fame, a desire arose to have his *darshan*, but he wanted company on the way; and was wondering how he would find someone.

99. Balabuva was himself a Haridas (*kirtankar*) who hailed from Satara but was living in Parel, Bombay, at this time.

100. At Brihad Siddhakavathe, in Satara District, there was a *devasthan*[23], where Buva did *kirtan* on *Ramnavami* day, every year, for which he was paid annually every year.

101. Balabuva was connnected with two annual festivals there – Ashadi *Ekadashi* and *Ramnavami*, falling in the month of *Chaitra*.

102. According to a charter of the Mogul Emperor [24], a sum of Rs.2400/- had been alloted for the expenses of the Deity (Bade Baba) and the arrangements were made by the institution.

103. For these two festivals, Buva was paid Rs. 30/-. But that year there was a cholera epidemic at Kavathe and the villagers were in difficulty.

104. Therefore, the *Ramnavami* celebrations were called off there. Buva received letters from there to come the next year as the village was deserted.

105. In short, he lost the opportunity to serve Ram and did not also receive his allowance. But it gave him an opportunity to go to Shirdi and, therefore, he met Dixit[25].

106. Dixit was a great devotee of Baba. The desire to go to Shirdi would be fulfilled if he takes it upon himself and, along with personal gain, spiritual benefits will be achieved.

107. So he told Dixit that, as his yearly stipend was temporarily held back, he had thought of having Baba's *darshan* and performing the *kirtan* there.

108. Bhausaheb then replied that there was no certainty of payment. To give or not to give was in the hands of Baba, and even for the *kirtan*, permission would be required.

109. While this conversation was going on, Kaka Mahajani came along unexpectedly and distributed *udi* as prasad of Shirdi and this was considered to be a good omen.

110. Mahajani had just returned from Shirdi. He conveyed that all was well there and thereafter returned to his residence.

111. Later on, Dixit very lovingly told Buva that he would ask for Baba's permission and if it was granted, he would definitely let him know.

112. "As soon as you receive the letter, come to Shirdi. Do not worry about the travelling expenses. You will not have to bear them. Have no doubts about it".

113. Later Dixit preceded (Balabuva). Baba gave his permission. Balabuva came to Shirdi and had *darshan* to his heart's content.

114. Sai Baba got the elaborate festival of *Ramnavami* performed in his presence with great love at the hands of Balabuva.

115. Balabuva was happy at heart. The objective had been fulfilled. Sai was also pleased. Thus everyone's wishes were fulfilled.

116. His expectations were more than fulfilled. Rs. 150/- was ordered to be received by him; and Buva was extremely happy.

117. Why shouldn't Balabuva be happy, when Baba gave as much earnings as he would have had in five years in Kavathe for one festival? Thus he was indebted to Baba.

118. Later on when Das Ganu was once in Shirdi, Baba on being so entreated, entrusted Das Ganu with the performance of the *kirtan* at the festival every year.

119. Since then, till this day, the *Janmotsav* [26] is celebrated with a lot of pomp and pageantry. Food is distributed to the heart's content and the poor and down-trodden are happy.

120. At the main gate of the *Samadhi Mandir*, accompanied by the music played by the traditional instruments (like *changbada* and *shehnai*), the chant of Baba's name resounds in the skies and the atmosphere is suffused with joy.

121. Just as he had thought of the *Yatra* and the *Urus*, Gopal Gund was inspired in the same manner, to give a new look to the old dilapidated *Masjid*.

122. As the devotee Gopal Gund decided to renovate the *Masjid* by his own hands, he got the stones ready.

123. But the renovation work was not ordained for Gund. The occasion for this auspicious work arose later appropriately.

124. It appears that Baba wished that the renovation should be done by Nana (Chandorkar) and afterwards the paving of the floor should be done by Kaka (Dixit).

125. Accordingly, it happened later on. In the beginning, they had got tired of asking for the permission. Then they made Mhalsapati[27] the mediator and Baba gave his permission.

126. So be it. When the paving of the floor of the *Masjid* was completed in one night, then the next day itself Baba came and sat on the *gadi* [28].

127. It was in the year 1911 that the *Sabha-mandap* was constructed. It was a difficult and Herculean task. It involved a lot of hazards and people trembled with fear[29].

128. This work was also completed by the devotees working at nights, in the same way and under similar circumstances.

129. In the night, the pillars would be erected with great difficulty and in the morning Baba would start uprooting them. Again seizing the opportunity they would be re-erected. Thus, everybody got exhausted.

130. Everyone girded up their loins, turned night into day, to fulfil their objective, undergoing a lot of exertion.

131. Dixit thought that the site was a proper place to construct the *Sabha-mandap* [30] where there was earlier an open ground and a small playground.

132. Putting in as much money as was needed, for iron columns and angle-brackets, the work was finished, as and when Baba was at the *Chavadi* [31].

133. The devotees would turn night into day and erect the pillars with much effort. But as soon as Baba returned from the *Chavadi,* he would pull them out.

134. Highly incensed on one occasion, Baba caught Tatya[32] by his neck with one hand and with the other shook a pillar and tried to uproot it.

135. He loosened it by shaking it; removed the head gear of Tatya; kindled it by lighting a matchstick, and threw it into the pit with anger.

136. At that time, his eyes looked like fire-balls. Who would dare to look straight into them? Everyone had lost their courage.

137. Immediately he put his hand in his pocket, took out a rupee and threw it there, as if to mark an auspicious moment.

138. Curses and abuses were showered. Tatya was also very scared at heart. It seemed a very difficult situation. How had it all happened?

139. All the onlookers were surprised and distressed. What is this bad omen to-day? How can this difficulty which has befallen Tatya be warded off?

140. Bhagoji Shinde[33] took courage and cautiously moved forward. He also fell an easy prey and was given a sound beating by Baba.

141. Madhavrao[34] was also caught by him and received a shower of brickbats. Whoever dared to intervene was similarly favoured by Baba.

142. Who would venture to go before Baba? And how could Tatya be rescued? As they were talking like this, Baba's anger subsided and he calmed down.

143. Promptly a shopkeeper was called and a zari-bordered headgear was ordered. He, himself, tied it around Tatya's head, like a *Rajah* who bestows a mark of favour.

144. People wondered and did not know the reason for the anger and this attack on Tatya and the reason for Baba making this hullabaloo.

145. What was the reason for getting angry and in the next few moments turning into a pleasant mood? The root cause could not be known by anyone.

146. Sometimes he was calm and talked lovingly. Sometimes, for no apparent reason, in the twinkling of an eye, he would be agitated unexpectedly.

147. So be it. Such are the stories of Baba. As I relate one I recall another. Which should I narrate and which withold? The tendency to diversify is not proper.

148. I have no preferences and make no choice. Whichever story is appropriate for the occasion will fulfil the desire of the listeners and fill their hearts with joy.

149. In the next chapter listen to the tales gathered from the old people whether Baba was a Hindu or a Muslim. I shall repeat what I have heard as best as I can.

150. How the money collected as *dakshina*[35] was utilised for renovation (of old temples); and how he mortified his flesh through *dhoti-poti* and *khand-yoga*.

151. How he toiled[36] for the benefit of others and warded off the difficulties of his devotees will be clarified in the next chapter. The listeners will be pleased.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the sixth chapter "The Narration of the Story of Ram-janam Celebrations" of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita,* written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

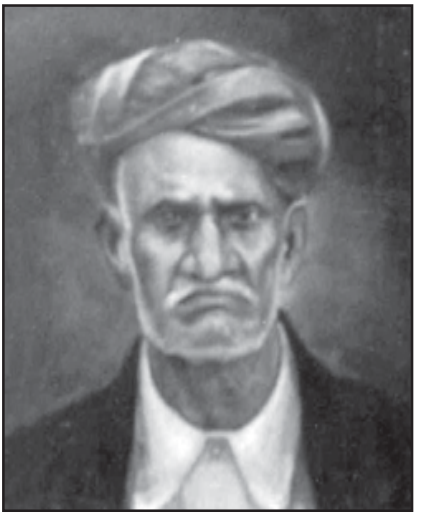
Notes:

1. The sacred ashes from the fire lit by him which burns eternal even to-day.
2. The eight forms of *Satvik* changes/ecstasies that shake the body and mind are: motionlessness, perspiration, horripilation, indistinctness of speech, tremor, paleness, tears and loss of consciousness.
3. Krishna's best disciple.
4. He was Circle Inspector, of the Revenue Department, at Kopergaon.
5. Religious festival.
6. Village Officer.
7. Nanasaheb Nimonkar i.e. Shankarao Raghunath Deshpande.
8. Damodar Rasne of Ahmednagar.
9. AD 1911.
10. Author of the book of *Aratis*
11. Laxman Ganesh alias Kaka Mahajani.
12. Performer of *Kirtans*.
13. She was Sundarabai Kshirasagar, a child widow who had come from Pandharpur by her own inclination to Shirdi around 1907.
14. Sweetmeats with ginger.
15. Garden by the small stream.
16. Every *Masjid* has a niche to the west.
17. For auspiciousness.
18. Half lion *avatar* of Vishnu.
19. Half lion *avatar* of Vishnu.
20. She had provided the cradle for the festival.
21. Feasting and merriment, following the breaking of the mud pot, filled with curds, parched rice, coins etc. The pot is hung high and reached by the formation of human *pyramids* by the merrymakers.
22. Brihad Siddhakavathe is a small place in Satara District. Satarkar performed the *Ramnavami Kirtan* there since years.
23. Institution.
24. Akbar. Even *Shivratri* was observed by the institution.
25. Hari Sitaram Dixit.
26. *Ramnavami* which is still celebrated at Shirdi.
27. Besides being the *pujari* of Khandoba Temple, he was a goldsmith.
28. The sack-cloth was given up for a proper seat, with bolsters.
29. Fearing obstacles for completion.
30. Covered courtyard for gatherings.
31. From December 10, 1909, Baba slept at the *Chavadi* on alternate nights, and the night *arati* commenced being sung there.
32. Tatya Kote Patil, beloved son of Bayjabai.
33. He was covered with leprosy. Yet he was such a great devotee that Baba allowed him to massage him with ghee from hand to foot, in the mornings, in the

Masjid. It was Bhagoji who carried the umbrella over Baba's head when he went to the Lendi in the mornings, with one hand, carrying the water-can with the other, thus accompanying Baba.

34. Deshpande, who was greatly loved by Baba, and who alone could coax Baba and speak to him with familiarity.
35. Gift offering.
36. Laboured and served.

Originating from the *Urus*, Ramnavami was celebrated for the first time in '*shake*' 1833; and, since then, it continues uninterruptedly to be held to this day. (Ch.6, ovi 59)



Tatya Ganpat Kote Patil

7

The Narration of Various Stories

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Let us pick up the threads of the previous chapter. Let us recollect, how much Baba loved the renovation of temples!
2. How he would strive to be benevolent to others! How he looked after and protected his devotees! How he would wear out himself! How he would suffer for the sake of his devotees!
3. He would take *samadhi* [1] doing *khand-yoga* practices. He would do *dhoti-poti* and other practices. Sometimes he would separate his head, legs and arms from the body and bring them together as before.
4. If you call him a Hindu, he looked a Muslim! If a Muslim, he had all the auspicious signs of a Hindu! Such was this extraordinary *avatar*. Which wise person can describe him!
5. Whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim, nobody was able to make the least conjecture! His behaviour was always the same towards both the communities.
6. *Ramnavami* was a Hindu festival. He would celebrate this as his own, by having the cradle tied up in the *Sabha-mandap* and have *kathas* and *kirtans* recited.
7. In the square, in his presence, the cradle would be tied and he would have the *kirtan* performed. And, the same night he would permit the Muslims to hold a *Sandal* procession[2].
8. As many Muslims, as wished to come, would join the *Sandal* procession with pomp and glory. He got both the functions celebrated equally happily.
9. When the *Ramnavami* day dawned, he was fond of arranging wrestling bouts and giving away prizes such as horses, anklets and headgears very enthusiastically.

10. When the *Gokulashtami* [3] festival would come, he would have the *Gopal Kala* done; and similarly, when it was *Id*-day[4], the Muslims were not restricted from *namaz*.

11. Once, when the *Muhurram* festival came, some Muslims came to the *Masjid* and asked for permission to have the *Taziya* [5] procession in the village.

12. According to his orders, the *Taziya* was built. It was kept for four days and on the fifth day was asked to be removed. He had no feeling of either pleasure or displeasure.

13. If he was a Muslim, he had pierced ears. If he was a Hindu, he believed in circumcision. Thus – neither Hindu, nor Muslim – such was the sanctified *avatar* of Sai.

14. If he was a Hindu, he lived always in a *Masjid*. If he was a Muslim, there was the sacred fire burning day and night in the *Masjid*.

15. In the *Masjid* itself was the grinding stone on which the grinding was done, in the *masjid* the bells would chime and the conch would be blown; and in the *masjid* the offerings to the sacred fire were made. What kind of a Muslim was he?

16. In the *masjid* there were recitations of *bhajans* always, free distribution of food, offerings to God, worship of feet and *puja*. What kind of a Muslim was he?

17. If he be called a Muslim, then the elite of Brahmins would come and do his *puja*; the *agnihotris* [6] would prostrate to him having surrendered their pride of purity to him.

18. This way, the people were astonished at heart. Whatever they would experience, they would behave accordingly and keep silent at the time of *darshan*.

19. So long as a person is surrendered to God, can he be called a Hindu or a Muslim? He may be of a low birth, or low caste, or without a caste (outside the pale of society). Caste is not the criteria of importance for Him.

20. One who does not have body consciousness, whether he is a Hindu or a Muslim, for him all castes and creeds are equal. The discrimination born of caste is not applicable to him.

21. He took meat with the fakirs or on his own ate fish; and would not be disgusted even if a dog put his mouth into his food.

22. A farmer stores grains obtained in the current year by building storehouses so that in case there is a shortage, in the next year, it would prove useful.

23. Similarly a gunny bag full of wheat was stored, and also a grinding stone[7] to grind the grain in the *Masjid*. There were also scuttles to winnow the grain. Nothing fell short of a householder's life.

24. In the *pandal* there was a decorative, beautiful and special *Tulsi Vrindavan* [8]. Nearby there is a wooden chariot,[9] beautifully carved.

25. Because of my good deeds of the previous births that I could come in contact with all these good things. I will hold these in my heart and will feel lack of nothing till the end.

26. Thanks to the good fortune of the previous births, I have been able to attain his feet, get peace of mind and contentment in household matters.

27. Afterwards, however much I may prosper, that happiness will never be regained which I experienced and was blessed to receive in the company of the great Sree Sai.

28. Sai is the store of ultimate happiness! How could I describe his uniqueness? Whoever surrendered to him was permanently settled for good.

29. Those *sanyasis* who have performed penance, holding *danda* and who use deer skins for clothing and for sitting; those who have visited Haridwar and been to *Tirthas* ; those who have practised hard penance; those who have renounced the world and those who are non-attached came there.

30. He would talk, walk and laugh a lot; he would always recite '*Allah Malik*'; he did not like arguments and discussions and he always carried a *satka* [10].

31. Ascetic, non-attached by nature, of moderate passions, with malice towards none, his speech flowed with *vedantic* philosophy (well-versed in *vedanta*)! Till the end none could fathom, who Baba was.

32. The rich or the poor were treated equally by him. The son of a wealthy person or of a penniless beggar would be measured by the same yardstick.

33. He would know the good and bad deeds of anyone and the inner most desires. He would tell them their confidential secrets by some hint which would astound the devotees.

34. He was the epitome of knowledge and wisdom which he kept under cover. It was a burden for him to be honoured. Such were the characteristics of Sree Sai.

35. Though he had a mortal body, his deeds were singularly uncommon like that of God. He was definitely the deity of Shirdi. All the people believed this faithfully.

36. How many were the miracles of Baba! How much can I, an insignificant person describe! Baba had the renovation of numerous deities and temples undertaken.

37. In Shirdi itself, by the hands of Tatya Patil, he improved the temples of Shani, Ganpati, Shankar-Parvati, the village deity and Maruti.

38. The money that he collected from people as *dakshina* [11] was spent in charity partly, and some was simply given away.

39. To some he would daily give Rupees thirty; to some Rupees ten, fifteen or fifty. Likewise, he would happily distribute according to his sweet will.

40. This money belonged to people of all religions; and those who accepted it were aware of this. Baba had the wish that it should be spent in a good way.

41. May it be so! Many people prospered only because of his *darshan* ; many wicked people turned good; many were cured of diseases (leprosy) and a lot of people achieved their welfare.

42. Without putting collyrium, or ointments or herbal juices many blind regained their sight. Those who were lame started walking just by surrendering at his feet.

43. Such was his infinite greatness that nobody was able to gauge its extent. From all four quarters, countless people started streaming in.

44. He sat at the same place near the *dhuni* . He eased himself there itself. He would remain at the same spot, sometimes with and at other times without a bath. He was always intent in meditation.

45. On his head he would have a special white headgear and tie a clean *dhoti* to his waist, put on a shirt or a *pehran* – such was his dress at the beginning.

46. Initially, he would practice ayurvedic medicine in the village. He would examine patients and give the medicines. He had a healing touch and became a famous *hakim* [12].

47. Once upon a time a devotee's eyes were swollen and were like red balls. Both pupils were blood-red and no *vaid* [12] was available in Shirdi.

48. The simple and pious devotees showed his eyes to Baba. Immediately, Baba got the marking-nut[13] *beeba* [14] pounded and made into balls.

49. Under the circumstances some may have put *surma* (powdered pearl);

some may have put wet pieces of cloth dipped in cow's milk; others may have kept cool camphor cakes on the eyes or some would have used collyrium.

50. But Baba's remedy was absolutely different. He picked up each *beeba* ball in his own hands and pressed as much as possible one in each eye and then tied a cloth around them.

51. The next day, the cloth tied around the eyes was removed and the eyes were washed with cold water poured in a steady stream. All the swelling had disappeared and the pupils were clear.

52. Although a delicate organ like the eye was treated by *beeba*, there was no burning and the disease was cured. Such were the countless experiences.

53. He knew the *yogic* practices of *dhoti-poti*. Without anybody's knowledge he would go to a secluded place and while bathing, vomit out his intestines, wash them and put them to dry out.

54. At the same distance, as the *Masjid* to the well, there was further on a banyan tree at a certain spot; and, beyond it, another well, where he would go every third day.

55. Right at noon, in the blazing sun, having made sure that there was no one around, he would take out water from the well with his own hands and wash his face and perform his ablutions.

56. On one such occasion while he was having his bath, he took out his intestines quickly and started washing them on the spot.

57. When a goat is slain, his intestines are turned inside out. After being thoroughly washed, they are cleaned and folded.

58. Similarly, he removed his own intestines, washed them inside out, and spread them on the rose-apple tree. People were extremely amazed.

59. Amongst those who have witnessed this feat with their own eyes, some are still living in Shirdi. They say that he was an unique Saint.

60. Sometimes he would practise *khand-yoga* and separate his arms and legs. This way, they would be scattered here and there in the *Masjid*.

61. In this way, the body would be broken in bits and pieces. The whole sight would be very gruesome. When a number of people ran to see this, they would find Baba intact.

62. Once having seen such an incident, the onlooker got terribly frightened and thought that some wicked person had killed Baba and committed this outrage.

63. In the *Masjid*, here and there, the limbs could be seen in all the four corners. It was midnight and no one was around. He was worried.

64. To whom should he tell this incident? On the contrary, he may be hanged. Thinking this, he went and sat outside.

65. It did not even occur to him, even in his dreams, that it was the *yogic* powers of Sai; and looking at the fragments of the body, his heart thumped with fright.

66. Someone should be informed of this incident. This thought occurred to him over and over again. But being the first person to give the information, he might be held as the culprit.

67. Therefore, he did not tell anybody. Many ideas came to him. Therefore, in the early morning, he went to look again and was surprised at what he saw.

68. There was not a sign of the earlier happening. Baba was sitting hale and hearty at his usual place. The onlooker was astounded and wondered if he had had a dream.

69. These practices of *yoga* – of *dhoti-poti* – were practised by Baba since his childhood. Nobody could understand the depth of it and fathom his *yogic* state.

70. He never took a penny from anybody. By his own virtues, he became famous. The weak and the poor were bestowed with good health by him and he became a famous *hakim* in that province.

71. He was a *hakim* only for the sake of others. He was totally disinterested for his own gain. To achieve the good of others, he endured a lot of hardship and pain.

72. To explain this I will tell an unusual story, for the sake of the listeners, which will make known Baba's compassion and his universal (all-pervading) powers.

73. In the year 1910, on *Dhanteras* day[15], Baba was casually sitting near the *dhuni* and burning firewood.

74. The *dhuni* was very hot and brightly lit up. He inserted his own arm into the fire and peacefully sat there. The arm came out scorched.

75. His servitor Madhav[16] saw it by chance and Madhavrao Deshpande was also nearby. He also ran towards him immediately.

76. He went and sat cross-legged behind Baba, put his arms tightly round his waist and pulled him back. He asked, "See what has happened?"

77. "O' *deva*, what have you done?" [17] At these words, Baba became aware of the circumstances. "A child suddenly slipped into the furnace from the arms being astride the waist (of the mother).

78. "Hearing her husband's calls, and being afraid, the blacksmith's wife took her child into her arms and started blowing the bellows of the furnace.

79. "While blowing, she lost her concentration and forgot that the child was in her arms. The child was extremely restless and she slipped. Shama, no sooner had she dropped, that I picked her up.

80. "While I tried to take out the girl, that this incident happened. Let my damned hand be scorched, the child's life is saved".

81. For the pain and suffering due to the arm, what remedy and by whom should it be done? Madhavrao decided to write a letter to Chandorkar.

82. He wrote the letter in detail. Chandorkar arrived in Shirdi immediately, bringing along with him the famous Dr. Parmanand.

83. To ward off the burning sensation, Dr. Parmanand brought with him a number of medicines which would be useful and came to the feet of Sai to serve him, with Nana.

84. After having bowed down to Baba, he asked him about his well-being, told him the reason for his coming and requested him to show him his arm.

85. But since the time the arm was burnt, Bhagoji Shinde used to apply *ghee*, place a leaf upon it and tightly bandaged it, every day.

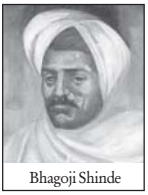
86. To remove the bandages, to show the arm to Dr. Parmanand, to start taking medicines to heal Baba,

87. with this good intention, Nana implored a great deal; and even Parmanand tried to remove the bandages and see the arm.

88. Not to-day, tomorrow again, the same thing, thus he never allowed his arm to be seen saying that his doctor was *Allah*. He was not the least disturbed about it.

89. Whatever medicines Parmanand had brought were never even opened in Shirdi. But, it was his good fortune to have Sai's *darshan* and therefore, perhaps this incident happened.

90. It was always Bhagoji who served him. It was only Bhagoji who would massage the hand. Then, after some time the hand healed and everyone was happy.


Bhagoji Shinde

91. In this way, although the hand was completely cured, one doesn't know what was in Baba's mind in allowing Bhagoji, every morning early in the day, to carry out the ceremony of tying the bandages.

92. Although there was no pain, regularly and for no reason, with the help of *ghee* a massage was done and the hand was cared for till death.

93. These services were for the sake of Bhagoji. *Siddha* Sai never needed them. He made Bhagoji render regular service with love, as a devotee should.

94. Because of the sins of his previous birth, Bhagoji was suffering from leprosy. But it was his good fortune that he came in touch with Sai.

95. Whenever Baba started on his round to Lendi, Bhagoji held the umbrella over Baba's head. Though his body was covered with black leprosy sores, he was the foremost in his service.

96. Whenever, early in the morning, Baba was seated restfully against the pillar, near the *dhuni*, it was his good fortune to be there to serve him.

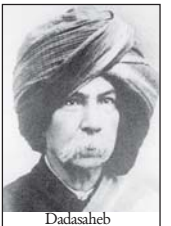
97. He would remove the bandages, massage the respective muscles, apply *ghee* to those parts, and thus be fortunate to serve him.

98. Bhagoji Shinde was a great sinner in his past lives. His whole body was bleeding with sores. He was greatly affected by this deadly disease. But he was a matchless devotee of Baba.

99. His fingers had become stumps because of leprosy and his whole body emanated a nauseating smell. Thus, the one with such a great misfortune, derived four-fold happines from his services[18].

100. How many such great miracles of Baba, can I describe to the listeners! Once when plague came to the village, listen to the miracle that happened.

101. Dadasaheb Khaparde's[19] young son was staying with his mother and enjoying the pleasure of Baba's company.


Dadasaheb Khaparde

102. As it is, the boy was very young and he got very high fever. The mother's heart grew anxious and she became agitated.

103. Her home was at Amravati. Therefore, she thought of going there. In the evening, at the proper time, she came to take Baba's permission.

104. While doing his evening rounds, Baba came near the *wada*. There, the woman bowed down at his feet and told him what had happened.

105. As it is women are timid by nature, and besides, the son's trembling[20] did not stop. Also, there was the scare of plague. Therefore, she told him what had happened.

106. Baba lovingly assured her with these words: "Know that the skies are overcast. The rains will come and the harvest will ripen. The clouds will clear up.

107. "Why are you afraid?" Saying this, he lifted his kafni upto the waist and showed everybody the fully developed bubos.

108. In four places, there were four bubos of the size of a hen's egg. He said : "See, I have to bear this because of your difficulties".

109. People were amazed to witness this divine and unique ordeal. How the Saints suffered for the sake of their devotees!

110. Their heart is softer than wax – just like butter appears outwardly. They have selfless love for the devotees as if they are his kith and kin.

111. Once it so happened that Nanasaheb Chandorkar left Nandurbar to go to Pandharpur.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar

112. Nana was very lucky. His whole-hearted devotion to Sai had borne fruit. He had the earthly paradise,[21] as he had got the *Mamlatdari* of that place.

113. When he received the orders at Nandurbar, he had to leave immediately. Hurriedly he made all the arragements, desiring in his heart the *darshan*[22].

114. Along with his wife, and family circle, he thought of going to Shirdi, as Shirdi was his Pandharpur; and he wanted to pay his respects to Baba.

115. He did not send a letter to anybody nor did he send any message. He gathered together all his belongings and got into the carriage hurriedly.

116. In this way, Nana started and nobody in Shirdi knew of it. But Sai knew everything, as Sai was all-pervading.

117. Nana started immediately. He must have been at the outskirts of Nimgaon. Now listen carefully to the miracle that happened at Shirdi, in truth, at that time.

118. Baba was in the *Masjid* with Mhalsapati. Appa Shinde and Kashiram, the devotees, were seated chatting.

119. At that moment, Baba said casually, "Let four of us sing a *bhajan*. The doors of Pandharpur have opened. We can sing joyously".

120. Sai had knowledge of the past, present and future. He had already learnt the news. Nana was near the stream at the outskirts, when Baba was singing the *bhajan* zealously.

Bhajan

"I am going to Pandharpur – going, going.

There I will stay. There I will stay, stay.

That is the abode of my Master."

121. Baba himself sang the *bhajan* and the devotees who were sitting around followed him. They were engrossed in their love for Pandharpur. Just then, Nana arrived.

122. He bowed down at his feet[23], with his wife and said that Maharaj should go with them to Pandharpur and settle there undisturbed and without any worry.

123. This invitation was not necessary. Already Baba was in joyous mood; and people told him[24], that he was ready to go to Pandharpur as the *bhajan's* words indicated.

124. Nana was extremely surprised and seeing the *leela* was amazed. He put his head at his feet and was deeply emotionally moved.

125. Taking his blessings, *udi* and *prasad*, and bowing again, Chandorkar set out for Pandharpur, after getting his permission to go.

126. If such stories are to be narrated, this book will extend beyond limits. Therefore, we shall curtail the subject of the warding off of other's sufferings.

127. Let us end this chapter now because there is no end to Baba's good deeds. In the next chapter, I'll relate some other stories, for my own well-being.

128. I have been unable to eradicate this ego of mine though I'm trying to do so. Who am I, I cannot understand. Let Sai tell his own stories.

129. He will tell of the importance of human life and will tell why he believed in being a mendicant, of Bayjabai's devotion and what was his state of mind during the meals.

130. Also, how Baba would sleep in the *Masjid* together with Mhalsapati and Tatya Ganpati Kote – listen to that.

131. Pant Hemad surrenders to Sai and calls himself an insignificant devotee, as humble as the slippers on his feet. He obeys Sai's orders and has completed the narration upto this point.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the seventh chapter "The Narration of Various Stories" of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. State of ecstatic and complete trance, with absolute control over all faculties, physical or mental. It is the highest state of *Yoga*.
2. Particularly shaped vessel containing sandalwood, taken to the niche of the *Masjid* in a particular ritual.
3. Krishna's birth celebrations.
4. *Id* days commemorate Muslim spiritual days.
5. The bier supposed to be symbolically, the tombs of Hassan and Hussein carried in procession at *Muhurram*.
6. Brahmins that maintain a perpetual and sacred fire.
7. One big grinding-stone was provided by Lakshmibai Shinde.
8. Holy basil is planted in a little tower-form erection for worship.
9. The chariot was donated by M.B. Rege, Dajisaheb Avasthi and others to the *Sansthan*; but is presently kept in an adjoining room.
10. A black wooden baton, about two-and-a-half feet long and thick as a big toe of the foot, also remained near Baba always. When he went to the *chavadi* from the *Masjid* and returned, he carried his *chillum* and tobacco pouch in one hand and the baton in his other.
11. Money given as a present at *darshan* to a saint.
12. Knower of herbal remedies.
13. Myrobalan.
14. Myrobalan.
15. Day on which the Goddness of wealth, Mahalaxmi, is worshipped – two days before Diwali.
16. Madhav Fasle.
17. Madhavrao exclaimed.
18. Baba never objected to anyone rendering services to him. In fact, he dealt with them lovingly. Once a woman came to him who was suffering a grevious malady. Maharaj told a Maratha woman, by the name of Bhimabai, to take her home and give her a place to stay there. Bhimabai said: "Maharaj she has a grievous malady. Is it not? How can I give her a place to stay in my home?" Maharaj replied: "What if she has a grievous malady! She is my sister; my very own sister. Take her to your home". After Baba spoke those words, Bhimabai took her to her home and kept her there. That woman stayed there for a month and passed away there. Another incident related to Balaji Patil Nevaskar. He came once to ask permission to leave for his home village. Maharaj replied: "That Dagadu Bhau is ill. You look after him". That man was a Muslim, suffering from black leprosy. Everyday, Patil would remove the worms from his body, clean all the pus himself and bathe him too. He carried on like this for a month. Then that Dagadu passed away and Patil was given permission by Maharaj to go to his home.
19. The Honourable Ganesh Shrikrishna Khaparde, Member of Legislative Assembly.
20. Due to high fever.
21. Pandharpur is known as 'Paradise on Earth'.
22. Of Baba at Shirdi.
23. Baba's feet.
24. Nana.

Baba's compassion for his devotees

"O *deva*, what have you done?" At these words, Baba became aware of the circumstances. "A child suddenly slipped into the furnace from the arms being astride the waist (of the mother). (Ch.7, ovi 77)

Bhagoji Shinde

8
The Incarnation of Sai Samartha

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. In the previous chapter, it was narrated how Sai was neither Hindu nor Muslim. How profoundly fortunate is the fate of Shirdi, which is Baba's abode!
2. How Baba was just an ordinary young lad in the beginning. Later on, he turned into an eccentric *fakir*; how he tended a beautiful garden which was originally barren.
3. How, in course of time, on that very spot a *wada* was built; and Baba's daring practices of *khanda-yoga*, *dhoti-poti*, have also been described to you.
4. By wearying himself in the service of others, Baba endured how many afflictions. Sairaya! the refuge of all the devotees, how can I describe him?
5. Now listen to the greatness of human birth; the description of Sai's mendicancy; Bayjabai's service to the Saint; the marvel of feeding Baba.
6. How Tatya, Baba and Mhalsapati – the three together, would sleep in the *Masjid* and how the Great One used to go to Kushalchand's house at Rahata.
7. Everyday the sun rises and the sun sets. Thus the years roll on. Half of life is spent in sleep and the remaining is not enjoyed peacefully.
8. In the childhood a person is engrossed in play; in youth in wooing women; in the later days old age enfeebles the body and one is always suffering from infirmities.
9. To be born and to grow strong in body; to breathe and to have a prolonged life; is this the only purpose of living?
10. The goal of human life is only to reach God, otherwise what is the difference between humans and animals, such as a dog or a pig or others?

11. The dogs too eat and survive and procreate abundantly, then what is the greatness of a human being, if both lead a similar life?
12. To eat and be merry, copulate – if these are the only ways of using the human body and only this is the goal of life, then that human life is meaningless.
13. If the whole life is spent in these four ways i.e. eating, sleeping, being constantly afraid and indulging in sex, then what would be the difference between the human and the animal? Oh, you decide, using discretion.
14. If this is the only fulfilment of a human body, then the life of a tree would not be less valuable. Even the bellows breathe and dogs maintain their body.
15. That man is independent, he is without fear, he is free and eternal – if this awareness is present, then it can be said that life is fulfilled.
16. That person is said to be knowledgeable who knows from where he has come, who he is and what is the purpose of human life and what is his mission. Without this knowledge everything else is futile.
17. Just as the wick of an oil lamp[1] is the same at the beginning and the end, but flickers and changes at every moment, similar is the state of the human body.
18. Childhood, youth and old age are the stages through which everybody goes; but how naturally they come and go is not understood by anybody[2].
19. What is seen is destroyed the same moment. There are such innumerable stages, but seemingly they look one. Similarly, the body which is perceivable at one moment will not be the same the next moment.
20. The body is evil (horrifying). It holds dirt, excreta, gases, pus, saliva etc.; and, besides, death is hovering about every moment.
21. The human body is the home of germs and viruses, harbours various diseases, not long-lasting and ends within a short period.
22. It is an accumulation of flesh and muscles, the cage or skeleton of bones and skin, a carrier of the muck of foul-smelling urine and what is vomitted (mucous and phlegm) – actually it is an obstacle to the soul.
23. Skin, flesh, blood and muscles, fat, bone-marrow, veins, bones and gases – all go to make this body impure and its existence of a short duration.

24. Although so sinful, perishable and short-lived is the human body, it is only through this that the abode of purity of God can be reached.
25. The cycle of birth and death is continuous. Even the very idea of death is extremely horrifying. This life will pass away without any inkling.
26. Who has kept a count, day and night, of those who are born and who die! Those born with a boon of Markandya[3] also cannot escape destiny.
27. In case of such short-lived human life, the time which is spent in reading the scriptures and listening to the stories of God is fruitful, while the time spent otherwise is a waste.
28. It should be a firm conviction that this is the best thing to do in life. But nobody believes in it till one experiences this oneself.
29. But to experience this, one has to make a deep study. Then the soul which seeks permanent happiness will enjoy that wealth.
30. Even by the grace of God, if a man reigns over vast lands whose boundaries are the seven seas[4] and also has a good wife, son, wealth and prosperity, he is still dis-satisfied at heart.
31. One should keep permanent peace and happiness as one's goal of life and think about it. Serve all beings as God – this is the most beneficial faith in life.
32. The human body is made of skin, flesh, blood and bones. It is an obstacle in the way of *Parmartha* [5]. Therefore, leave the attachment to it.
33. Always consider it as your servant. Do not pamper it. Do not always succumb to its wishes, by which you will be, as it were, paving your way to hell.
34. Food and clothing should be only for its maintenance. You should care for it knowing it to be temporary, for the sake of the development of the soul and to escape the cycle of life and death.
35. Birth and death are nothing but calamities. Every moment is set towards destruction. What momentary pleasure is this which brings in its wake unhappiness throughout life.
36. Just as one sees the zig-zagging lightening, which is there for a moment and then disappears; the waves of the ocean which are also momentary; (similar is the body). Therefore, think.
37. The body, the house, the children and wife – all these will perish. But one never realises it even when one bids farewell to one's own parents, while carrying their biers on the shoulder.

38. They are dead and the one in good health will die after them. One gets caught in the cycle of birth and death. But one does not think even for a moment by what means it can be controlled.

39. Life passes quickly in looking after the progress of the family. But time never forgets its duty and readily keeps count of the tenure of life.

40. When the last moment has come, then it does not wait even for a split second. Just as the fisherman casts his net and the fish gets caught, so life ends as it tosses about writhing at the touch of death.

41. By means of a store of good deeds from the past births and by accumulating good fortune, a person gets human birth. Therefore, every moment should be used well.

42. Even by making Herculean efforts, like Bhagirath[6] trying to hold the Ganges in his hair, it is not possible to obtain human birth. Because of destiny, unexpectedly, we are able to get it. It should not be wasted carelessly.

43. He is a fool who thinks that he will do good deeds in the next birth. There is no certainty that it will be so[7] once this life escapes.

44. There are many sinners who have this body. Their genes reach the organ of creation to take a new form according to their deeds.

45. There are many who are even more wretched and vile. They take birth in the movable class[8]; then become absolutely immovable[9], according to their actions and their thoughts.

46. The way in which one has acquired knowledge, or has performed his deeds, he will get the body accordingly. Thus it is stated in the *Shrutis*.

47. "A person is born according to his knowledge" (wisdom). The benevolent mother *Shruti* says so. Therefore, according to his store of knowledge, a soul is born.

48. God's *leelas* are beyond the intellect. It is impossible to know them totally. But that human being should be considered fortunate, who is able to know even a fraction of God's ways.

49. Human life is acquired by utmost good luck; and to be born a Brahmin is more fortunate. By God's grace to be near the feet of Sai is a rarer opportunity. To gain all these is rare.

50. Although there exist different forms of life, human life is superior to all. From where have we come? And who has created us? Such questions can be answered only by a discerning human mind.

51. The other species do not have the knowledge. They are born and they die. They do not understand the past, the present and the future and nor the existence of God.

52. God was, therefore, overjoyed after the creation of man, thinking that man, by means of sense discretion and non-attachment, would worship Him.

53. Evanescent man doing *sadhana* [10] (Spiritual Practices) will become eternal God. There is no other better means than the human body, to reach God through *sadhana*.

54. A snake-charmer is very shrewd. He does not perform before a layman or a novice. He expects the right audience which will appreciate his skill.

55. Similarly, after creating innumerable insects, animals, birds and plants, God was surprised and disappointed. He felt that His creation was meaningless.

56. In the infinite expanse of the universe, the sun, the moon and the innumerable stars were there; but there was nobody who wondered even for a moment about the Creator.

57. Not a single living creature had even given a thought to the motive behind the whole creation of the Lord.

58. 'My whole creation is futile till such time as I have not created a being who will be sharp and intelligent and who will appreciate the prosperity and abundance of my creation'.

59. Having thus thought to Himself, God created man who with his sense of discretion would know His powers.

60. 'My glory is limitless. My powers are incomparable. This creation is the result of my *Maya*. With wonder he will realise that all this is the sport of my *Maya*.

61. 'He only will gain knowledge. He only will be able to concentrate on Me and realise Me; he only will be benefitted – then only will the creation be complete.

62. 'The fullfilment of My creation lies in the great happiness of My spectators (men). Man will be grateful when he will realise My empire and that I am the whole and sole controller or holder of the reins.'

63. Life is not to be lived only for doing work, to fulfil one's wishes to acquire wealth and for earning money. Until one survives, one should study the philosophy of life. That is the aim of life.

64. The knowledge of reality is oneness. That is also the knowledge of *Brahman*, as prescribed by the *Upanishads*. That is itself the worship of God. That is the real God for the devotees.

65. *Guru* and *Brahman* are not two separate entities. One who has realised the oneness, he (as it were) has practised devotion. This realisation is the easiest way to overcome *Maya*.

66. Those wise men who have faith, who have acquired knowledge and who are non-attached, who have realised that *atma-tatva* [11] which is experienced by them, know that they are really the fortunate devotees.

67. Those unaware of their own real nature, if without removing their ignorance, believe that they have achieved everything in life, then this is a tremendous obstacle (to their spiritual progress).

68. Knowledge and ignorance, both these elements are born of nescience. You should discard them, just as one removes a thorn by means of another thorn.

69. Remove ignorance through knowledge. Go beyond both knowledge and ignorance. Reach the stage of Pure Self-realisation. This is the only goal for a human life.

70. Pure knowledge will not shine lustrously unless the impure oil in the form of passion is exhausted; and the black soot in the form of ignorance and the wick in the form of ego[12] is not destroyed.

71. Whatever work a man has to perform, whether avoidable or unavoidable, and within the ambit of intelligence, should be certainly considered as duty.

72. If one does not have any other work, one should enjoy wealth and peace, or recite *Ramnam* [13] and be desireless and without worry.

73. The body, the sense organs, the mind and the intellect are all the hinderances of the *Atma* (soul). But by means of these, the soul is able to fully experience this world or existence. The soul itself is unborn and unattached.

74. Only outwardly the soul seems to enjoy, because by nature it is incapable of enjoyment. It is proved by the science of logic and by means of inferences etc.

75. Having understood this essence of life, entrust the intellect to perform all the duties befitting the *karma*. Let the righteousness of the intellect be left to it. One should act without seeking the fruits of action.

76. The performance of one's religious duties; being always engrossed in the meditation of the Inner Self – these are the aims of human birth, whereby inner satisfaction is obtained.

77. There is no other means as effective as human life to fulfil the four principle objects of life[14]. That man who practises these and becomes an expert will reach God.

78. Therefore, till the body is not decaying, try to acquire the knowledge of the soul. Do not waste even a moment of human life.

79. Just as the salt water from the ocean, when it falls down from the clouds [15], turns sweet as nectar, similarly is the happiness of being at the feet of the Guru.

80. Similarly, the happy state attainable by human life cannot be realised without the Guru. When the Guru gives the necessary help[16] then only will the creatures be delivered.

81. Sacred *mantras*, the *tirath*, the deity, the brahmin, the fortune-teller, and the druggist – thus the seventh in this line is the Guru – all these need faith.

82. Success is achieved in proportion to the faith in all these. Depending upon the intentness of the mind, success varies.

83. For those who are bound to this world, the Saints create the desire for '*moksha*' in their hearts; and for the persons who are seekers of *moksha* they are liberated. The Saints manifest themselves from the non-perceivable self only for the good of others.

84. Whatever is not achieved, through lectures or by reading *Puranas*, is easily understood from the behaviour of a virtuous person (Guru). His attitudes and example are his silent preachings.

85. It is rare to find a person who practises forgiveness, peace, non attachment, kindness, and obliges others, who is in control of his senses and who is devoid of ego.

86. That which is not achieved through reading books is achieved easily by observing the person who practises all the virtues prescribed by the *Shastras*. The sun alone can achieve that which the infinite stars cannot do.

87. Similar are the noble Saints, their numerous, simple[17] actions free those who are tied to the world and are a source of extreme pleasure.

88. One out of these is the great Saint Sai, full of divine attributes and perfections. But he lived like a *fakir* and was always engrossed in Self-Realisation.

89. Whose faith in equality was unshakable; who never uttered the words 'me' and 'mine'; who was always kind to all living beings; he was the very embodiment of God on this earth.

90. He was not overjoyed by pleasure nor saddened by difficulties; for whom the rich and the poor were alike. Is this not something unusual?

91. He whose slightest movement of an eyebrow could make a pauper into a wealthy man in a moment, he roamed from doorstep to doorstep, with his *jholi* in his hand.

92. Blessed are those at whose doorstep, Baba as a mendicant spread his hand, calling "Oh, *lassie*, bring me a quarter of a *bhakri*".

93. Taking the *tumrel* [18] in one hand and the *jholi* [19] in the other, he himself moved from doorstep to doorstep of the particular houses every day.

94. Vegetables, curry, milk and buttermilk, were all poured into the tumrel by the people. Look and wonder at this method of his eating!

95. For cooked rice, or *bhakri* , he would spread the *jholi* ; the liquid items he managed to somehow collect in the *tumrel*.

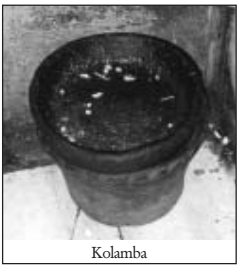
96. How can the desire be born in his heart to taste the different kinds of food separately! How can he wish so, when his tongue has never known the passion for taste.

97. He is content with eating the food which falls in his *jholi*, as per the desire of the giver. He is not aware whether it is tasty or tasteless, because his tongue does not discriminate.

98. During the morning, he would beg alms in the neighbourhood daily; and, had his fill from it and was satisfied with it.

99. Even that was not done regularly. He would go whenever he felt like it. Sometimes he would go in the village and even beg twelve times in the day.

100. In this manner, whatever food he brought, he kept in a pot in the *Masjid*. Even the crows and the dogs would eat from it and he would never drive them away.


Kolamba

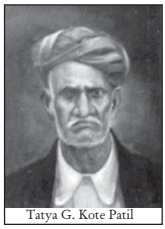
101. The woman who swept the *Masjid* and the front courtyard would take ten to twelve *bhakris* from the pot and go to her home. But nobody took objection.

102. The one who would not even dream of contemptuously driving away dogs, and cats, would he refuse the poor and the weak? Blessed is his life!

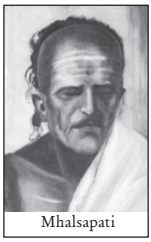
103. In the beginning, he was well-known amongst the people as the mad *fakir*. The one who filled his stomach by begging for food, how could he have any grandeur?

104. But the *fakir* was generous by nature. Never expecting anything in return and loving, outwardly he looked wavering but was inwardly steadfast. His behaviour was impossible to understand.

105. In such an ordinary (mean) village, there were some fortunate people who were kind by nature and who regarded him as a Saint.


Tatya G. Kote Patil

106. Tatya Kote's mother, whose name was Bayjabai, would put some *bhakris* in a basket and carry it on her head and go into the woods in the afternoon.
107. She would walk for miles, searching in the woods for the mad *fakir*, trampling upon the thick foliage and bow down to his feet on finding him.
108. How can one describe the strength of her devotion! Dry or curried vegetables and *bhakri* she fed Baba with her hands, in the woods, in the noon or late afternoon.
109. This austere devotion of hers was also not forgotten by Baba during his lifetime. Keeping the past in mind he blessed her son with good fortune.
110. Both the husband and wife had great faith in the *fakir* indeed. The *fakir* only was their God; God lives in the faith of the devotee, does'nt He?
111. The *fakir* would be in meditation. Then Bayjabai would lay out the leaf[20], serve the food from the basket, and make efforts to feed him.
112. "Fakiri is true kingship. Fakiri alone will last forever. Look how evanescent is wealth". Baba said this always.
113. Later on Baba abandoned the woods. He began to stay in the village and accepted food in the *Masjid*. Thus he put an end to the mother's troubles.
114. Since that time, this practice continued which had been started by both[21]. After them, Tatya continued the same.
115. Blessed are those Saints in whose hearts Vasudev[22] resides permanently and blessed are those fortunate devotees who enjoyed the bliss in their company.


Mhalsapati

116. Tatya was really fortunate. And Mhalsapati had profound religious merit. They equally enjoyed the privilege of Baba's companionship.
117. Tatya and Mhalsapati slept also in the *Masjid*. Baba's incomparable love was for both, equally.
118. East, West and North – their heads in these three directions – the feet touching each other's in the centre.
119. Stretching their bedrolls thus, they chatted about everything. If one began to doze off, the other one kept him awake.
120. If Tatya began snoring, Baba would get up suddenly, turn him around and press his head.

121. Taking Mhalsapati's help, they would hug Tatya, hold him close, press his feet and massage his back.

122. In this manner, for fourteen years, Tatya slept in the *Masjid* near Baba. Oh how lucky were those days, they had passed, the memory of which remained undimmed!

123. Leaving parents at home, Tatya slept in the *Masjid* with Baba, since he liked it. With what measure can we measure that love!? And who can evaluate that grace!?

124. Later on, the father died. Tatya got involved in the household. He himself got married and became a householder. Then he began to sleep at his own home.

125. May that be whatsoever. Faith should be complete – of heart and mind. This alone can give the experience of Sai. Uninvited he stands by his devotees. The devotees are surprised at this.

126. Similarly, there was a well-known gentleman of Rahata, named Kushalchand. He was a rich devotee of Baba and a merchant of the town.

127. The famous Patil, Ganpat Kote was a great favourite of Baba. So was the uncle of Kushalchand – an equally favourite person of Baba.

Kushalchand

128. Though Marwari by caste, they[23] were very fond of Baba. They[24] met each other from time to time, and enjoyed the pleasure of these meetings.

129. By the will of God, after some time, the elder *Sethji* died. Even then Baba did not break the ties. In fact his love grew twofold.

130. Later on, Baba's love for Kushalchand increased. Till death, day-by-day, he thought only of his good.

131. Sometimes by bullock cart and sometimes by a *tonga*, Baba would go in the company of his friends, one and a half miles away to Rahata.

132. The village-folk would come forward with drums and wind instruments and Baba would meet them at the boundary. They would do obeisance with love to him.

133. From there, they would take Baba into the village ceremoniously, with great love, joy and music.

134. Kushalchand would then take Baba to his house. Thereafter, serving some refreshments, they would sit leisurely.

135. Then they would exchange nostalgic memories. And the happiness they mutually enjoyed could not be described.

136. In this way, after relaxation and after eating the fruits and refreshments, Baba would return with his entourage, in a contented mood[25].

137. On one side Rahata stood – on the other Nimgaon. Shirdi was midway – a small village with a small population.

138. But from the centrepoint, he never moved physically except to these two villages, although he had the knowledge of all quarters.

139. Neither had he travelled nor had he seen the railways. But he knew the timings of the trains, their arrival and departure time-table.

140. To catch the train, the devotee would make all the preparations and then go to seek Baba's permission, when he would say : "What is the hurry?"

141. "Baba if I do not hasten. I will miss the train to Bombay and lose my job as my master would throw me out".

142. "There is no other master here. Why are you in such haste? Go and eat a little. Go after the afternoon meal".

143. Who is there who would dare to disobey those words! The young, the old, the wise and the learned knew this from their own experience.

144. Whoever followed his orders, never missed their train. But those who did not follow them, they faced the direct consequences.

145. One after another, the unique, innumerable experiences of such people, of different kinds, I will tell you, later on, in short.

146. Hemadpant surrenders at the feet of Sai and in the next chapter he will continue the same subject about how the devotees returned (from Shirdi) to their village and how Baba would give the orders.

147. Those who had the permission could leave and those who did not would stay. Those who disobeyed would suffer. This will be described in the next chapter.

148. And also about why Baba adopted the ways of a mendicant and why he ate the food that he begged for – for the sake of washing away of the sins committed daily, when animal life is accidentally destroyed. All this would be told later.

149. Therefore I pray at the feet of the listeners, and persuade them, every moment, to listen to the Sai-Charita, for the sake of their own good.

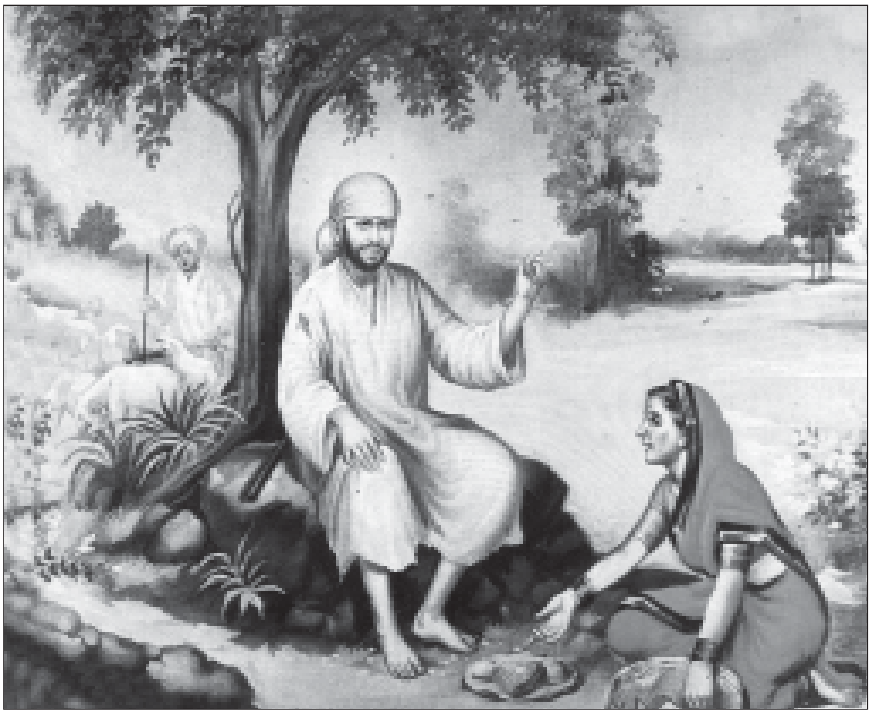
May there be well-being! This is the end of the eighth chapter "The Incarnation of Sai Samartha" of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant impelled by Saints and virtuous people.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Light kept burning before a deity continuously during night and day, which is called '*Nanda-deep*'.
2. One is unaware of the subtle changes taking place within the body.
3. He was blessed with a very long life.
4. Like an emperor.
5. Ultimate spiritual goal.
6. An ancient king of the Solar dynasty, the great grandson of Sagara, who brought down, by the most austere penances, the celestial river Ganga from heaven to earth and from earth to lower regions to purify the ashes of his 60,000 ancestors, the sons of Sagara.
7. That he will have human birth.
8. Such as a bird or animal or insect.
9. Like a tree.
10. Good works and observance of the moral and ceremonial parts of religion, as secondary means of obtaining purity and emancipation.
11. Essence of the Supreme Spirit.
12. 'I' and 'my' ness.
13. The name of Ram or the Lord.
14. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha* – living by the right conduct, acquiring wealth, having spouse and progeny and attaining salvation.
15. After due process of evaporation as rain.
16. Takes under his wings.
17. Outwardly simple for observers – but full of deep meaning.
18. Tin for collecting gravied food.
19. Four – cornered cloth used for collecting alms.
20. Which served as a plate.
21. Bayjabai and her husband Ganpat.
22. The father of Lord Krishna. He belonged to the Yadava branch of the solar race. Vasudev is also one of the many names of Lord Vishnu.
23. Kushalchand and his uncle.
24. Baba and the men from Rahata.
25. H.S. Dixit had an incident to relate in this connection:- One day, in the latter part of the day, Maharaj said to me that Kushalbhau had not come since many days. 'Go with the tonga to Rahata and bring him. Tell him that Baba has called you'. Accordingly, I went with a tonga to Rahata and met Kushalbhau. He said: 'I had napped after the afternoon meal. No sooner than I dozed that Maharaj appeared in my dream and said: 'Come to Shirdi'. Therefore, I desired to go there but since my horses are not here to-day, I could not do so. Therefore, I have just sent my son to Shirdi.' I responded: 'That is why Maharaj has sent me with a *tonga*. My *tonga* is ready if you are willing to come.' He, thereafter, came with me, with great pleasure.



How can one describe the strength of her devotion?! Dry or curried vegetables and *bhakri* she (Bayjabai) fed Baba with her hands, in the woods, in the noon or late afternoon. (Ch.8, ovi 108)

Bayjabai G. Kote Patil

9
Untitled by Dabholkar

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Now to continue the story, of how the devotees faced troubles when they insisted on returning to their destinations without Baba's permission.
2. And also, of the mendicant life style of Baba which he had adopted and which he practised until the end, for the washing off of the five sins,[1] for the sake of the good of his devotees.
3. Beginning from *Brahman* (the permanent and immovable) and ending with all immovable objects, Sai himself is manifest everywhere. Sai, being kind, imprinted (on all minds) that God exists in all creatures.
4. Therefore, all you listeners, I appeal to you to listen with attention. By listening to these holy stories, you will accomplish your own well-being.
5. This was a characteristic of the pilgrimage to Shirdi, that if a devotee would try to return without Baba's permission, he would be inviting trouble.
6. But, once permission is given, it was impossible to stay in Shirdi even for a moment. If one stayed on, difficulties would be faced. This was the experience of all.
7. Those who disobeyed his wishes, suffered on the way. Some were robbed; and they remembered their experience till the end of life.
8. If he asked them to eat a little and then leave, and if still a person hurriedly[2] left without food, he would not catch the train and would also go hungry. Many devotees experienced this.
9. Once Patil, Tatya Kote, was going to Kopergaon where the weekly bazaar was held. On the way, he came to the *Masjid*.

10. He asked for the *tonga* to wait; came and took Baba's *darshan*, bowed at his feet and pretended to ask for permission to leave.
11. The devotee may try to evade, but Baba was aware of the propitious moment or otherwise. Seeing that Tatya was in a hurry, he asked him to wait for a while.
12. "Let the bazaar take place! Don't leave the village". But seeing that Tatya was very keen, he asked him to take Shama along.
13. 'What is the point in taking Shama'! Thinking thus, he disregarded his order and went and sat in the tonga and set off for the bazaar.
14. Out of the two horses, one was very active and restless. It cost Rs. 300/-. When they neared the well at Sawul, it became unrestrained.
15. The horse which never needed whipping and would reach the bazaar within an hour, suddenly got a catch in his back and began limping.
16. So neither the market nor the shopping! Tatya remembered Sai Mother and felt that if he had obeyed timely, he would have avoided the accident. But nothing can be done about things past.
17. On another occasion, a similar incident took place. Tatya set out to go to Kolhar village. He harnessed the *tonga* and came to seek permission and bowed at Baba's feet.
18. "I'll just go and return", he said. He had not got his consent; nevertheless Tatya went ahead and left. Listen to what happened next.
19. The *tonga* had a horse which ran uncontrollably. The horse started rearing. He did not pay heed to the hurdles or obstacles on the way. It was a question of life and death.
20. Be it so. With Sai's grace that danger was averted. The *tonga* dashed against the babul tree. It was fortunate that it broke there. Further danger was averted.
21. Similarly, an European gentleman, residing in Bombay, came for Sai's *darshan* with some inner motives.
22. He had some influence with Chandorkar, who wrote a letter to Madhavrao. He asked for a tent and stayed there comfortably.
23. Could anyone dare to climb the steps of the *Masjid* and return after taking *darshan*, at one's sweet will, against Baba's permission? It was known to every one that this was impossible.
24. He tried thrice to climb the steps of the *Masjid* but it was all in vain. The spirits of the guest were dampened.
25. His inner wish was to climb up the steps of the *Masjid*, bow down

to Baba by falling on his knees and sit down there after kissing his hands.

26. That was his wish. But Baba did not let him come up to sit close to him in the *Masjid*, at that time.

27. He should be down in the courtyard and sit there only, if he wanted. He could take the *darshan* from there only. But he should not come up.

28. Be it so. Later on he thought of leaving. He came into the courtyard to take leave. Then Baba said he should go next day. Why is there so much of a hurry?

29. A lot of people told him and requested him, in several ways, not to go. Those who left without permission had greatly repented, they said.

30. Nothing can prevent what is fated! He did not follow the advice and left without permission. He suffered on the way.

31. At first, the carriage went well. Later on, the horses left the track. When they were beyond the well at Sawul,[3] a bicycle came in the way.

32. The gentleman was seated in the rear of the carriage. Suddenly the carriage gave a jerk. It lost its balance and overturned on the road.

33. With great efforts the carriage was controlled. The man got dragged for some distance. Then he was picked up and put into the carriage, which then moved forward again.

34. Shirdi was left behind on one side. Bombay was on the other side. The carriage[4] was then taken in the direction of the hospital, at Kopergaon.

35. So be it. The man stayed there for some days, repentant and distressed. He was undergoing the punishment due to his disobedience, as per his destiny.

36. There were many such instances. People began to have fear and apprehension and began to obey Baba's wishes. They dared not disobey.

37. In some cases the wheel[5] of the carriage came off; in some cases the horses got tired; in other cases they missed their trains, remained hungry and had to survive on puffed rice.

38. On the contrary, those who respected his wishes, were able to catch the trains even at odd times. They had a pleasant journey and remembered it throughout their life.

39. If people have doubts about why Baba preferred to beg for alms, for years together, then get the doubts cleared, and bear in mind the clarification.

40. If we look at Baba's life-style, it seems that it was the right thing for him to do to beg alms; because it gave pleasure to the people, and would do good to them to fulfil their duties as householders.

41. The one who surrenders body-speech-mind-wealth at Sai's feet, such a devotee is deeply loved by Sai.

42. The householder is in charge of whatever food is cooked in the home. He has to offer the food to a mendicant and a *brahmachari* [6] in the first place.

43. The householder who partakes of food without giving it to them has to perform the *Chandrayan Vrat* [7], which is advocated by the *Shastras* as a means of three fold purification[8].

44. It is forbidden for the mendicants and the *brahmacharis* to cook. If they do they will have to forcibly observe the *Chandrayan Vrat*.

45. Therefore the *Shastras* have placed the onus of taking care of their needs on the householder. Mendicants never exert themselves to fulfil their hunger.

46. Baba was never a householder and did not become a *Vanaprashthachari* [9]. He was only a *brahmachari* from his youth and also a *sanyasi*. Therefore, to beg alms was the rightful thing for him to do.

47. "The whole universe is my home. I am myself Vasudev and all pervading God. I am myself the *Parabrahma*". One who has such firm conviction,

48. has the fullest right to beg alms. He believed in the philosophy that the whole world is one family. The others make a mockery of this philosophy, as can be seen, on all crossroads.

49. At the outset, one should give up the wish for a son,[10] then lust for wealth and status. One who has given up these three desires, he only has the right to beg for alms.

50. Otherwise, as Tukaram quotes: "Fie upon that life depending upon charity and begging", because it is useless without understanding the meaning of such a life.

51. The great Sai is a very great *Siddha* (or *yogi*). That is known to all, young and old. But we, who are full of worldly ties, do not devotedly attach to his divine feet.

52. Without the five sacrifices[11], the householder is advised against eating of food. But Sai would perform these sacrifices[12] and get the food cooked and daily purified the meals.

53. Everyday he would go to five houses and remind the hosts about

the *Attithi Yagna*. So the persons were really fortunate who could sit at home and earn the *punya* [13].

54. Those people, who after performing the *panchmaha yagnas,* ate the remaining food, were saved from the terrible and unknown five sins, because the sins were burnt.

55. The well-known five sins are : *kandani* – pestle, *chulli* – lighting the hearth fire, *udkumbhi* – water pots; *peshani* – grinding, marjani– sweeping.

56. The grains are put in the pot (*ukkal*) and the pestle strikes the grain so that the chaff is removed and unknowingly during this activity lives are destroyed.

57. But the grains are not edible without the above-mentioned treatment. Therefore, the sin known as *kandani* is counted first in the list of *Panch soonas*.

58. In the stove, wood is burnt and cooking is done. There also, without knowing, life is destroyed. This sin is known as *chulli* , the second sin.

59. Even in a grinding stone or wooden grinding mill, when grains are ground, unknowingly innumerable lives are destroyed. That sin is known as peshani.

60. When people bring water in the pots from a well, or a lake, or a tank, or when men and women wash clothes, innumerable lives are destroyed.

61. While cleaning the pot, scrubbing and rubbing with the hands, unwittingly life is destroyed. This is the fourth sin of *udkumbhi* .

62. Similarly, when bathing in lukewarm water or while sprinkling cow-dung (on the floor), life is destroyed pitiably. This sin is called *marjani*.

63. In order to be free from these five sins, a householder has to perform these five *maha yagnas*, after which the sins are destroyed and he attains purity.

64. This is the power of purity of mind. The pure knowledge that is gained is sinless. After knowledge, liberation is secured. This is the attainment of the goal of life.

65. So be it. This was Baba's philosophy of mendicancy, writing about which has increased the pages of this book. Listen to a different type of story. Then we will close this chapter.

66. There should be only love in your heart. If any one sent anything (for him) with someone, and if that person forgot, Baba would not forget to ask.

67. Whether it was a vegetable or *bhakri* or sweetmeats, the devotion should be strong. When Sai came across such a devotee, in whom there was such faith, then his love would swell.

68. This is the story of a loving devotee, which will be a pleasure to hear. If anyone forgets the task assigned to him, Baba himself guides him to the right path.

69. His teaching was so agreeable. He gave necessary and timely awakening. Fortunate were those who experienced it and their bliss was inexplicable.

70. For one of his leading devotees, Ramchandra whose father was Atmaram and whose surname was Tarkhad, Sai was a haven of refuge.

71. But as he was known as Babasaheb Tarkhad by all, we will use the same name in this book, as it is not necessary to use the other name.

72. With overflowing love for Sai, Tarkhad used to be overwhelmed and, as it were, be annointed by it; and when he described his experiences listening to them was a pleasure.

73. Oh, how great was his devotion! At every step he would experience Sai, and each one would be more marvellous than the other. He would relate these experiences accompanied by appealing gestures.

74. Babasaheb was an unparalleled devotee. He had a painting of Sai's image, at his home in a huge beautiful sandalwood shrine, which he worshipped thrice a day.

75. Tarkhad was very fortunate in having a son equally devoted to Sai. He did not even eat his food till he offered *naivedya* to Sai.

76. Having taken a bath early morning, he would always perform the *puja* of the picture with his whole heart, mind, speech and body and offer *naivedya*, full of devotion.

77. This was his daily routine, which was carried on without exception. His labour bore fruit. He had excellent experiences.

78. Even his mother was a great devotee of Sai. She had a desire to go to Shirdi and the father wished that the son should accompany her.

79. She wished to go to Shirdi – take *darshan* of the powerful Lord – spend some days there – and actually serve at his feet.

80. Although his father wished it, the son did not wish to go, as he was worried as to who would perform the *puja* regularly at the home.

81. His father was a *Prathnasamajist* [14]. Would it be right to ask him to

take the trouble to do image worship[15]. This was a big dilemma for the son.

82. Nevertheless, knowing his wishes[16], the son got ready to leave. He entreatingly and lovingly requested his father. Listen to that wonderful story.

83. "Unless Sai is offered *naivedya*, no one should eat the food at home. Until this is promised, I won't be able to go carefree".

84. The father already knew the son's daily ritual; he said, "Go, I will do the *naivedya* regularly. You may remain without any anxiety.

85. Before making the offering to Sai, no one will partake of the food. Take this as my word of honour and do not hesitate. Go at ease".

86. Having been thus assured, the boy left for Shirdi. Then from the next day, Tarkhad himself did the *puja*.

87. The next day, before starting the *puja*, Babasaheb Tarkhad came before the portrait, prostrated himself and prayed.

88. "Baba accept my services in the same way, as my son was doing the *puja*. Let it not be just a drill, on my part. Pour your love into my heart".

89. Having bathed early morning, Tarkhad began doing the *puja* with devotion every day and offering *naivedya* also.

90. Babasaheb used to offer a piece of rock sugar in the *naivedya* regularly. This practice continued uninterruptedly. But one day it was broken.

91. Once, being pre-occupied with official matters, Tarkhad forgot and everybody had their meals without *naivedya* one day.

92. Tarkhadsaheb was the Chief Officer of a big mill. Therefore, in the morning he had to go out every day for his work.

93. Then by the time it was afternoon, he returned. As mentioned earlier about the sugar *prasad*, when he sat down to his meals, he partook of it.

94. This was the usual practice. On one occasion he forgot. The sugar was not put in the *naivedya*, and he also did not get the *prasad*.

95. Every day, the cook would serve the piece of sugar last, when he started his meals, as if it was the purification of the food.

96. But on that day, at the time of the *puja*, there was some hurry, and the sugar *naivedya* remained undone. Therefore he also had no *prasad*.

97. Immediately, Tarkhad left his meal, and being very repentant, bowed down to the portrait of Sai and with tears in his eyes said:-

98. "Baba, what illusion have you shown! How did you cause this

confusion of mind? How did you let me just do a drill! First forgive me.

99. "It's not a mistake but a great sin. I am greatly repentant. A mistake; but I did not deliberately make the mistake. Please be merciful to me, Maharaja".

100. He prostrated himself at the foot of the portrait. He was full of remorse. He said: "Maharaj, Cloud of Mercy, have pity on me".

101. Saying this he sent a letter to his son, in great humility and shame. "A great error has been committed by me. Pray that I may be forgiven.

102. Have mercy on one who has completely surrendered. Pray entreatingly to Sai in these words. Ask for this humble servant, his gesture of forgiveness and his assuring words".

103. This incident took place at Bandra, whereas Shirdi was a hundred *kos* away. But the news reached there immediately. Listen to Baba's words about it.

104. Now have the proof of Maharaj's ability, of the knowledge without distortion, beyond time and place and about the past, present and future.

105. On that day here, while the son was in Shirdi, at that very moment what happened when he bowed down at Sai's feet, the listeners should hear carefully.

106. The son, full of enthusiasm, came with his mother to pay homage. Listening to what Sai said to his mother astounded him.

107. "Oh, mother! What should be done. To-day when I went to Bandra, as usual, I did not get anything to eat, or drink rice-water, and had to return hungry.

108. "Mark the bonds that we have from the past births! Even if the doors are closed, I entered at my own sweet will. Who can obstruct me?

109. "The master of the house was not at home. I was ravenously hungry. I had to return without food, in the heat of the afternoon sun".

110. When he heard these words, the son immediately realised that his father perhaps had forgotten to offer *naivedya*.

111. The son requested Baba to let him go home. But Baba did not allow him and got him to do the *puja* there only.

112. That very day, he sent a detailed letter from Shirdi. On receiving and reading that letter the father's heart melted.

113. His letter was also received there (the letters crossed). The son was also surprised. His eyes also filled with tears, which rolled down.

114. See the sport of Sai! Would love not gush forth? Who could be so stone-hearted, who would not melt by this?

115. Now listen to the miracle about Baba's favour shown to the loving mother of this very boy, once when she was in Shirdi.

116. When she was in the kitchen and the leaf plates were set for the meal in the afternoon, a hungry dog came to the door.

117. A piece of the bhakri, which was in her plate, was about to be given by her to the dog, when a pig, bespattered with mud, arrived there, oppressed with hunger. (She fed both).

118. This incident happened in its natural course. She did not give any importance to this or bear it in her mind. But Sai on his own opened this topic, when she was present.

119. After the afternoon lunch, when the lady came as per usual practice, and sat in the *Masjid* at some distance, Sai said kindly:

120. "Oh mother! You fed me to-day, because of which I am full upto my throat. I was overcome with hunger and you satisfied me.

121. "You must act like this always. Truly, only this will prove useful ultimately. Sitting in the *Masjid*, I do not ever speak an untruth. This is the universal truth.

122. "Know that this is the kindness which I preach. Give food to the hungry first and then eat yourself. Remember this clearly in your mind".

123. What did Sai Samartha say? The lady could not understand anything. What was the implied meaning of this? His words were never futile.

124. She said: "How could I have served you? How could it happen at my hands? I am dependent. I spend and eat whatever I can get".

125. Baba answering her said: "Savouring that lovingly given chappati, I became fully satisfied and I am still belching.

126. "When you sat down for your meals, you suddenly saw a dog come to the door, which was suffering from extreme hunger. I am one with that dog.

127. "Similarly, I am one with that pig bespattered with mud, which was also hungry and miserable".

128. When she heard Baba's words, the lady was very much surprised. Dogs, pigs, cats which wander – are they one with Baba?

129. "Sometimes I am a dog, sometimes a pig, sometimes I am a cow, sometimes a cat, sometimes an ant, a fly or fish. I move about in different forms.

130. "That person who sees me in all the creatures, you must understand is my beloved one. Give up the belief in the two-fold nature, and worship me in this manner".

131. These were not just ordinary words, but nectar. She was overwhelmed with emotions. Her eyes were filled with tears of happiness and her throat was choked with emotion.

132. Similarly there is another story of this lady, which is wonderful and depicts love. It shows the oneness of the great Sai with his devotee; and that the two *Atmas* are one.

133. Once when Purandare[17] with his wife and children set out for Shirdi, she[18] gave him brinjals with affection which she requested his wife to make *bharta* [19],

134. with one, for Baba, and *kacharya*, crisp and brown, from the other, and feed him heartily with them.

135. His wife accepted the brinjals and when she reached Shirdi, after the *Arati*, at lunch time, she took the *bharta*.

136. As was the custom the lady offered *naivedya* kept the *thali* [20] and left. Baba collected everybody's *naivedya* and sat down for the meal.

137. When he tasted the *bharta*, he relished it and shared it with everyone. He felt like eating *kacharyas* and asked for them, at that time.

138. A message was sent to Radhakrishan Ayi, that Baba is waiting to finish his meal and he desires to have *kacharyas*. No one knew what to do about it.

139. That was not the season for brinjals, so how could that preparation be made?! Therefore, a search for Purandare's wife was made and for the *bharta*.

140. The *bharta* was in the *thali* which she had brought. Therefore, it was possible that she might be having some spare brinjals.

141. When she was questioned about it, all came to understand about the significance of the *kacharya* and also about Baba's keeness for them.

142. The lady said that out of one brinjal, *bharta* was made and offered in the afternoon; and had thought that she would take the *kacharya* later on. Therefore, the second one had been cut up accordingly.

143. Later on when this episode about the brinjals came to be known to everbody gradually, everyone was surprised at seeing Sai's all-knowing nature.

144. Again, in the month of December 1915, the same lady sent a *pedha* [21] for Baba, with great love.

145. Since Balaram[22] had expired, to perform the last rites, his son had to go to Shirdi. He had come to take leave[23] and ask if there was any message.

146. The son came to Tarkhad to say that he was leaving. The wife felt like sending something for Baba with him.

147. Except for the *pedha* there was nothing else to be found in the house. Moreover, the *pedha* had already been offered in the *naivedya*. The son was also in a hurry to leave.

148. Besides, the son was in the mourning period.[24] There was only one *pedha* leftover. She sent that itself with him, as an offering for Sai to eat.

149. She said she had nothing else. "Take this only. Give this with love to Sai. Sai will eat it with pleasure".

150. Govindji took the *pedha* with him. But when he went to take the *darshan*, he forgot it at the place where he stayed. Baba was yet quite patient.

151. Afterwards, in the late afternoon, when he came into the *durbar* hall, like the previous time he forgot and came empty handed into the *Masjid*.

152. "What have you brought for me", Baba casually asked him. "Nothing at all", said he, at which Baba tried to hint and remind him.

153. "Has no one given you anything for me?" On his saying no, Sai Samartha directly questioned.

154. "Oh, when you left home, did not mother give you a sweet lovingly?" Then he remembered.

155. He was very much ashamed. How did he forget! With his face downcast, he asked for forgiveness and bowed down at his feet.

156. He went running to his place, brought the *pedha* and gave it to Baba. As soon as he got it in his palm, he put it in his mouth and thus gratified the feelings of the mother.

157. Such is the great Sai, *Mahanu Bhav* (*Yogi*).[25] He reciprocates the feelings, by giving the experiences, He increases the prestige of his devotee.

158. The essence of these stories is that one should perceive God in all living beings. This is also acknowledged by all the *Shashtras*. The same is the doctrine of these.

159. Now while listening to the next chapter, you will understand about Baba's mode of living – where he used to sleep and at which place. Listen to that carefully.

160. Hemad surrenders at Sai's feet. Listeners, think about the foregoing stories with respect and meditation daily, and you will be benefitted.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the ninth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Given in detail later.
2. Once, Tatyasaheb Noolkar and Bhausaheb Dixit were to leave Shirdi, with their friends. Maharaj said to them: "Go tomorrow morning and eat at Kopergaon." They acted accordingly and sent a message to Kopergaon to keep the food ready. But, when they reached Kopergaon the food was not ready. As the departure time of the train was near, they left for the station without eating. There, they discovered that the train was late by two and a half hours! They sent the tonga back, and had the food fetched by the Brahmin tonga driver. All of them ate at the station. After they had finished, the train came ten minutes later.

   Now, see the reverse case. Once Raghuvir Bhaskar Purandare had gone for Maharaj's *darshan* with many of his friends. As per his mother's desire, he asked for permission to go to Nashik. Maharaj said: "Go. Stay for two days and then proceed". The group went to Nashik, accordingly. That day his younger brother ran high temperature. Everyone was frightened and desired to go to Bombay immediately. But Purandare said : "Maharaj has directed us to stay for two days. Therefore, I will not move from here till two days are past". Then the whole group stayed, as they had no other alternative. The brother's temperature came down the next day and on the third day the group returned to Bombay, happily.
3. A village about one and a half miles away from Shirdi.
4. With the gentleman.
5. This is the experience of the author himself. He prepared to leave with his family. Maharaj said: "Eat a little bit and leave in the afternoon". But unwisely the bullock – cart was set on the road to the station. Being in a hurry to catch the train, the cart was at full speed. The left wheel suddenly came off and fell in the gutter. Praise God that the cart did not break and no one was injured. But by the time the wheel was properly re-set, the train was missed. They had to go to an eatery at Kopergaon, eat there and then take another train to Bombay.
6. A Brahmin ascetic vowed to celibacy, a monk or a student of the scriptures.
7. A religious observance starting from full-moon day and ending sixteen days later, taking only sixteen mouthfuls on the first day and then reducing by one every day till he takes nothing on the last day.

8. Of speech, body and mind.
9. Taken to the jungles leaving society.
10. That is, for spouse and progeny.
11. *Brahma Yagna* is reciting of *Vedas*; *Pitru Yagna* – offering food by encircling with water; *Dev Yagna* – offering food to the deities; *Bhoota Yagna* – offering food to all creatures. *Attithi Yagna* – offering food to the uninvited guest who may come to the doorstep.
12. For the sake of his devotees.
13. Merit of a good deed.
14. They did no image worship.
15. Of Baba's picture.
16. The father's wishes.
17. Raghuvir Bhaskar Purandare, who lived at Bandra, Bombay.
18. Mrs. Tarkhad.
19. Brinjals smoked, skinned and pulped to which spices and curds are added.
20. Platter.
21. A round sweetmeat, which varied in size and flavour.
22. Balaram Mankar, who was Baba's devotee.
23. Of the Tarkhads.
24. *Sutak* i.e. thirteen days after death when a household is deemed to be impure and during which no religious rites are performed.
25. Devoted and hungry for devotion.

Ramchandra Atmaram
alias Babasaheb Tarkhad

10

The Greatness of Sree Sai Samartha

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. The one who is always engaged in doing good to all people, who is permanently established in *Brahman*, remember him always with devotion in your heart.
2. By merely remembering him, the riddle of life and death is resolved. This is the best *Sadhana* for which one does not have to spend a single *pie* [1].
3. With little efforts we can get substantial gains. The gain is easily attained by all. Till all the faculties are in tact, every moment should be thus utilised.
4. All other deities are an illusion. Guru is the only God. When you place your faith at his feet, he can change your destiny.
5. Where there is pure service to the Guru, the worldly bondage is completely destroyed. There is no need to learn logic and such sciences which are akin to it, and take pains over anything.
6. The ocean of three-fold difficulties[2] will be crossed by the faithful devotees when the true Guru becomes the navigator of the ship.
7. When one wishes to cross the ocean, one must have faith in the navigator; similarly, to cross the *samsaric* ocean one must have faith in the Guru.
8. When he sees the faith and devotion of the devotee, he gives the wealth of happiness due to *moksha* in the palm of the hands, most easily.
9. By having his *darshan*, the ties of the heart to all evil tendencies are broken off, detachment towards all the passions takes place; and the effects of the previous births disappear. Let us sing his praises.
10. In the eighth chapter, the purpose of human birth was explained

and in the ninth, the deep and secret nature of mendicancy was described.

11. Bayjabai's vegetables and *bhakri* (how she fed him); Kushalchand's well-being; the sleeping together of Tatya and Mhalsapati; and this was pleasantly described.
12. Oh, you listeners! now pay attention to the further description of Baba's life, how he lived and where he slept and how he inconceivably pervaded everything.
13. What a life-time of being a celebrity! He was a mother to both Hindus and Muslims. He had the confidence even of natural enemies[3]. They could move about without fear, with a heart full of love.
14. I have told you about his daily routine. Now let us know about his ways of living and where he slept. Oh listeners, listen with respect.
15. A wooden plank, in length equal to four fore-arm lengths and a span wide, used to hang like a swing, tied to the ceiling by means of a few rags at both ends.
16. On such a plank Baba slept. Earthen lamps would burn at his head and his feet. When he climbed up or climbed down, was not known to anyone. Inconceivable are his movements.
17. He sat on it with his head bent. Sometimes he slept on it. But no one knew when he climbed up or climbed down.
18. A plank which was tied by means of rags, how could it hold Baba's weight? But when he had the great *Siddhis*, the plank was just a pretext.
19. Even a tiny particle pricks the eye. But a person who has mastered the *Siddhi* of anima (to become as small as an atom) can hide with ease. Baba was able to freely move about in the form of a fly or a worm or an ant.
20. One who has anima *Siddhi* at his service, does it take time for him to take the form of a fly? He can stay hanging in the sky without support. What can he care for a plank?
21. When the eightfold *Siddhis*, such as *anima-mahima-laghima*[4], like the nine-treasures, are standing besides him with folded arms, (i.e. at his service), for him the plank is only a pretext.
22. Insect, ant, pig, dog, animal, bird, man, king, beggar, big or small, he looked at all with equality.
23. Although he seemingly resided in Shirdi and had a body three and a half cubits[5], he lived in every person's heart – Maharaj who was the store of *punya* [6].

24. In his heart he was detached and not involved, but outwardly he was fond of having people around him. Though in his heart he had no wish to fulfil, outwardly he was ensnared by the devotees.
25. Inwardly he was completely desireless but outwardly for the sake of his devotees he had desires to fulfil; his mind was the abode of peace within but his behaviour was excessively incensed.
26. In his heart of hearts he enjoyed ultimate *Brahma* - like bliss, but outwardly he showed the nature of the devil; on the surface he was involved with the affairs of the world but within he had love for oneness or unity.
27. Sometimes he had the look of affection in his eyes but at times he would run after a person carrying a stone; sometimes he shouted and cursed, and sometimes he would embrace with love.
28. Sometimes he would be completely at peace and subdued, patient and forbearing, always absorbed in meditation, self-realised! and always engaged in thoughts of the soul, a delight of the devotees.
29. He sat meditating in one posture (as a *yogi*); he did not go hither or thither; his only *dand* was the *satka* (every *yogi* has a *dand*). He remained still and uncomplaining.
30. He had no desire for fame or wealth and lived by begging alms, advanced in the knowledge of *yoga* (at the highest level) and lived by it.
31. Actually, he wore the garments of a *sanyasi*, and his *dand* was his *satka*. He continuously recited the words '*Allah-Mallik*'. He always nurtured great love for his devotees.
32. Such is the manifested form of Sai possessed of attributes, appearing in human form. Unexpectedly, we have received this treasure because of the good deeds of the past.
33. Surprising are the ways of destiny whereby those dull-headed, ignorant people were blessed and loved by him. How had they really been able to reach him!?
34. Sai is the mine of Self-Realisation. Sai is complete peace in itself. Hold fast only to him devotedly to cross the worldly ocean.
35. Truly, that which is boundless and eternal, filled from *Brahma* to *Stamba* [7]; that which is everlasting and identical, Baba is that incarnate.
36. The duration of *Kaliyuga* is counted as four lakh and thirty-two thousand years. Since its commencement, roughly five thousand years have passed. Baba then appeared.
37. Here the listeners might doubt how I have arrived at this

without the knowledge of his date of birth. So listen carefully with respect.

38. After his re-appearance, having taken a decision to be a resident of Shirdi, he spent sixty years thereafter renouncing everything.

39. He was sixteen years when he first appeared in Shirdi. At that time, he lived there for three years.

40. From there, where did he disappear? He was seen in the far off kingdom of the Nizam. He then returned with the marriage party and permanently stayed in Shirdi.

41. He was twenty then. Since then he has been permanently associated with Shirdi. There he spent sixty years. This is known to all.

42. In *Shake* 1840 (1918 AD) in the month of Ashwin, on the tenth day of the bright fortnight, on the auspicious day of *Dassehra*, Baba left for his heavenly abode.

43. Thus having lived for eighty years, one can broadly conclude that Baba was born in *Shake* 1760 (i.e 1838 AD).

44. The great souls who transcend time and space, can their life span be exactly calculated? It is a formidable task.

45. The great souls are existing in their own orbit. They are neither born nor do they die. How can the sun rise or set when in reality it is steady and immovable.

46. In *Shake* 1603 (i.e. 1681 AD) Ramdas took samadhi and not even two centuries had passed when the great one was born.

47. In those days, *Bharat* was invaded by Muslims and Hindu kings were subdued. Devotionalism had disappeared and the people had lost faith in religion.

48. At that time Ramdas was born. With the help of Shivaji he saved the country from the Muslims; and the cows and brahmins were protected.

49. Even two centuries had not passed and again the peace was disrupted. There was a faction between Hindus and Muslims, which was then eradicated by Baba.

50. "Ram and Rahim are one. There is not even the slightest difference. In that case why should there be an obstruction to devotion! and indifferent behaviour towards each other?

51. "Oh you ignorant children, bring Hindus and Muslims together. Be firm on your path and have good thoughts. Then only, you will be able to go across to the other side.

52. "It is not good to argue; do not try to compete with each other. Always think of one's own (permanent) good and God will protect you.

53. "Practising *yoga*, performing rituals, doing penance, acquiring knowledge, these are all the means for attainment of God. One who does all this without the grace of God, worthless is his birth.
54. "If anyone harms you in any way, you should not retaliate. If possible try to oblige others". This is the sum total of his teaching.
55. For the sake of one's own good and for the sake of the ultimate good in life, this is an all embracing creed. It's a straight forward path for all, including the high, the low, the women and the *sudras*.
56. Just as the grandeur of the kingdom of dreams turns into nothingness as soon as the person awakens; similarly, this world is just an illusion. This is his conviction.
57. His regular behaviour or disposition is based on the conviction of the illusory nature of pleasure and pain regarding the body. According to him these were wanderings of the mind, as in a dream. Therefore, he has warded off the illusion and reached the state of emancipation.
58. When he sees the worldly attachment of his disciples, his heart melts with pity; and he worries day and night how to remove those bonds.
59. His whole nature is one with *Brahman*. He is the embodiment of permanent bliss; his mind is without any doubts. He is the incarnation of resignation (denial of pleasures).
60. He does not carry cymbals or a flute and does not go to every door step. He also does not beg from every passerby with a grief-stricken face.
61. Many such Gurus are there who collect a number of disciples around them and who forcefully give a *mantra* in the ear (secretly), merely to make money.
62. They teach their disciples righteousness, but their own behaviour is contrary. How will they help them to cross the worldly ocean and avoid life and death?
63. To make known his piety (religious merit) or let his name reach far and wide, that was not at all his intention. Such was Sai!
64. There was no bodily pride in him. He had great love for his disciples. Always, this was his nature. Such was Sai!
65. There are two types of Gurus – *Niyata* (decided by destiny) and *Aniyata*. For the sake of the listeners, the working of each one will be explained.
66. The *Aniyata* Guru stresses on the development of the divine qualities and purification of the mind. These are the only things that an *Aniyata* Guru can grant. He can also show the path of *moksha*.

67. When a bond is established with a *Niyata* Guru, the two-fold nature of the self disappears. Oneness with God takes place and he gives witness to the great statement that "God and yourself are not different".
68. The universe is full of Gurus, who manifest for the sake of the devotees and when their mission is complete they take *samadhi*.
69. Sai is of the second category of Gurus. How can I describe him? I will write as he guides me.
70. There are many teachers available for physical sciences. But he who brings his student to realise his own nature is the *Sadguru*. He is the real, the great one who can take you across the worldly ocean. His greatness is imperceptible.
71. Whoever goes to take *darshan*, Sai tells him the past, the present, and the future. Sai, without being asked, knows and narrates the motives and intentions, and everything in detail.
72. He who looks at everything and at all creatures as *Brahman* itself, who looks upon friends and foes with equality and who does not discriminate the least,
73. He is without expectations and regards everything equally, showers nectar of blessing even on those who have done harm to him. His mind remains unperturbed in good times or bad times. He entertains no doubts.
74. Though living in this perishable body, he is not entangled in the bonds of the body. Outwardly, he looks a physical being but inwardly, he is without body. Such a person is truly liberated though with a body.
75. Blessed are those residents of Shirdi whose deity is Sai and who worship him and who constantly think of him while eating, drinking or sleeping.
76. Blessed are those and their affection for Sai who, while working on the farm, or being in their backyard, grinding, husking or churning buttermilk[8] sing the praises of Sai.
77. There were those who never thought of any deity other than Baba and who continuously remembered him while sitting, eating or sleeping.
78. How wonderful is the love of those women! What sweetness their love possessed! Pure love inspires poetry and not mere learning.
79. Though the language is simple and straightforward and does not

have even a fragment of scholarship, inspite of that the poetry is so lustrous that it makes even the erudite nod his head in appreciation.

80. The manifestation of real love only could compose genuine poetry. That can be heard by the listeners in the compositions of the ladies.

81. If Sai Baba so wishes the complete collections would be available and the listeners' wishes will be fulfilled. They would be able to listen to those poetical compositions.

82. So be it. Because of the devotion of the devotees, the *nirakar* (that which is without form) has manifested in Shirdi in the form of Sai. He who has abandoned bodily ego and who has no passions - understand him through devotion.

83. Or, the collective good deeds of the devotees have borne fruit completely at the opportune time. In Sai's form, they have sprouted and borne fruit at Shirdi.

84. That which is mute, breaks into speech; that which cannot be born, has come alive; that which is abstract has taken a form from the very mould of the essence of mercy.

85. He is the embodiment of the six virtues[9] – he shines with success, wealth, non-attachment, intelligence, prosperity and generosity.

86. Baba's restraint is extra – ordinary. He himself does not possess anything. Though he is formless, he takes the form to grant grace to his devotees.

87. Oh how wonderful is his kindness that he enjoins the devotees to himself with affection! Otherwise which other godly person could they have reached?!

88. The great Sai speaks such words, for the sake of the good of his devotees, that those words even the deity of speech is not able to speak – such words that even the ears are put to shame to hear.

89. It is better not to explain the words but to keep silent. But since I cannot evade my duty, I am compelled to speak out.

90. For the love of his devotees, Baba's words spoken with great humility: "I am the humblest of your servants. I am your debtor. I have come here to have your *darshan*.

91. "This is a great favour of yours that I have been able to reach your feet. I am a maggot in your excreta. I consider myself blessed thereby".

92. What humility on the part of Baba! Oh how much he desired to be humble. What height of complete abandonment of ego! He was equally modest too!

93. The above mentioned words of Baba were really spoken by him and I have respectfully presented them. If anyone feels that it is disrespectful then I beg pardon.

94. If speech has become impure and if the sin of hearing is to be avoided, let us recite Sai's name continuously. It will cleanse the sins of all.

95. Our austerities of all the previous births have borne fruit by Sai's grace. It gives endless contentment like a thirsty person obtains on being given water at a water-distributing place.

96. Though it seems that he relishes food through his tongue, actually he does not feel the taste, because his taste buds are not aroused.

97. He who does not have any passions, how can he be said to enjoy any pleasures! Where the pleasures do not affect his senses, how can he be said to indulge in pleasures!

98. Though, through his eyes he perceives things which come before him, he does not actually see them as he does not have the desire for them.

99. The genital organs of Hanuman were seen only by his mother and Sree Ram; therefore, then with whom can his celibacy be considered comparable!

100. When even the mother has not seen the private organs, then what about the others! Baba's celibacy was the highest kind, complete in itself and exceptional.

101. He used to wear only a cod-piece or loin-cloth around his waist. His genitals were never aroused[10]. They were only for the sake of performing the bodily functions of urination or excretion. They were only for the sake of the bodily functions.

102. Such was the state of Baba's body that though the sense organs performed their duties, yet there was not even an iota of passion aroused.

103. Because of *satva*, *raja* and *tama* guna qualities, all the sense organs were tied down to their respective places. Though in the practical sense they were active, there was no attachment involved.

104. Baba was not attached, he was the Supreme Being, turned towards his Self, whose desire and anger were put to rest, who was free from desires and attachments, and who had completely achieved his mission.

105. Such was his state of liberation that he regarded the sense objects as *Brahman*. He was beyond good deeds and bad. He was the abode of complete repose.

106. When Nanavali[11] asked him to get up, he left his seat. Such is he who does not have the slightest ego or who does not even dream of discrimination.
107. He has nothing left to achieve in this world and nothing left to accomplish in the next. Such a Saint, in order to grace (serve) the people, has manifested on this earth.
108. The purpose of manifestations of such merciful Saints is none other than to grant favours to others (to oblige others) for their welfare.
109. Their hearts are like butter. Some say they are very soft-hearted. They melt in tenderness over the sufferings of others. They feel that it is their own suffering. That is why they melt like butter.
110. Whose clothing is a patched up *kafni* ; whose seat is sack-cloth; whose mind is free of desires – what is a silver throne for him?!
111. Seeing the devotion of his devotees, he ignored the fact that they, after their difficulties were resolved, turned their backs on him.
112. Baba is the lotus in the lake of Shirdi. The devotees enjoy the fragrance; but the unfortunate ones are those who wallow in the mud all the time, and partake only of that mire[12].
113. He did not tell anyone to perform *asanas*, or to practise *pran*, *apan* (*yogic* practises), or to control the sense organs, nor gave them *mantras*, or asked them to perform rituals or gave them amulets or asked them to chant or sing *bhajans*. Such false or fake advice he did not give.
114. Generally, he looked as if he was an ordinary person, but within, he was different. He was extremely competent in practical life and was without peer.
115. For the sake of the devotees he took form. His emotions and passions were also for them. Such is the popular behaviour of the Saints. All of you should realise this as the truth.
116. Sai Maharaj is the treasure of peace. He is the abode of pure and heavenly bliss. I prostrate myself to him, who is without ego and who is unsullied (undefiled).
117. That place is sacred and sanctifying where Maharaj has come to stay, on his own. Unless there is enough of accumulated good fortune, through the previous births, it is difficult to attain this treasure.
118. "Only from a pure seedling, juicy and sweet fruits can come". (Purity bears juicy and sweet fruits) – said Tukaram. This famous couplet has been tested by the people of Shirdi.
119. He is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim. He does not belong to any

caste or creed. But he completely destroys and annihilates the bonds of the world.

120. Just as the sky is limitless and immeasurable, so is Baba's life unfathomable. Who would properly understand it, except himself?

121. The work of the mind is to think. There is not a single moment when one does not think. If the subject is the senses, the mind will think of the senses; but if it is the Guru, it will think of the Guru.

122. By listening with concentrated attention (turning all senses into ears) whatever you have heard about the greatness of the Guru, that is effortless *smaran* (remembrance), and *kirtan* (stories in praise of the Lord) of Sai.

123. *Panchagni-sadhan* (rituals), performing sacrifices and burning sacrificial fires, recitations of *mantras*, *tantras* (chants and spells), practising *ashtang yoga*, are only possible for the *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishnavas*. What is the use of these for others?!

124. Such are not the stories of the Saints. They put everyone on the path of righteousness. They remove the worldly fears and miseries and appear themselves for the welfare of the others, in attaining the goal of life.

125. By listening and reflecting over the stories of the Saints, by their studious application and intent contemplation, the *Brahmins*, the low-castes and the women are purified.

126. There is no person (human being) without attachment. It is not possible for such a being to exist. Some are attached to certain things and some others to something else. But a human being is looking for attachment.

127. For some, the object of attachment is children; for some, money, honour and riches; some are attached to the body, the house or popularity; some in attaining knowledge.

128. Whatever the attachments for different objects, if all such love is collected and poured in a mould at the feet of the Lord, then it appears in the form of devotion.

129. Therefore, the easy way out for the householder is to surrender his mind to the feet of Sai. Then he will bless you.

130. If with such little efforts such great good can be achieved, then why should there be indifference to achieve this gain?

131. Naturally, a doubt may occur in the minds of the listeners, that if such great gain is there, then why don't many people practise it?

132. There is only one reason for this. The ardent desire does not arise without the Lord's Grace. Only when the Lord chooses to bless (grace), the desire to listen (to his praises) is awakened.

133. Therefore, surrender to Sai. God will bless you. The ardent desire to listen to his praises will arise. This is the easy means to God.
134. Hold on to the good company of the Guru and the virtuous. Disentangle from the worldly ties. Definitely herein is your fulfilment. Have no doubts.
135. Abandoning all the million clever and cunning ways, recall always 'Sai, Sai'. You will be able to cross the worldly ocean. Have no doubts.
136. These are not my words. They are the profound words of Sai. Do not think that they are worthless. Do not try to evaluate them.
137. Bad company is absolutely harmful. It is the abode of severe miseries. Unknowingly, it would take you to the by-lanes, bypassing the highway of happiness.
138. Without the one and only Sainath or without a *Sadguru*, who else can purify the ill-effects of bad company?!
139. Words spoken by the Guru, out of compassion, oh devotees! retain them in your heart. Your bad deeds will be washed away.
140. The beauty of nature satisfies our eyes. Our aesthetic sense is attracted to it and enjoys it. If we divert that very sense, it would delight in *Satsang*.
141. Such is the greatness of *Satsang*[13] (that it completely destroys bodily pride or ego. Therefore, there is no other means than *Satsang*.
142. Always do *Satsang*. All other means have some faults. Only *Satsang* is flawless. It is pure in every way.
143. *Satsang* destroys the bodily attachments. Such is the power of its strength. Once there is firm faith in it, there is truly liberation from the mundane world.
144. If one is fortunate in having *Satsang*, then one understands the preaching easily. At that very moment desire for bad company will melt away. The mind will be free to enjoy the *Satsang*.
145. In order to attain final emancipation, the only remedy is to have detachment of the senses. Unless one has a keen desire for *Satsang*, one cannot realise one's true identity.
146. Happiness is followed by unhappiness; and unhappiness follows happiness. One welcomes happiness, while one turns away from unhappiness.
147. Whether you face happily or turn your back on your destiny, what will be, will be. But to liberate oneself from both kinds of destined experiences, the company of the Saint is the only way.
148. Because of *Satsang* bodily attachment is destroyed. It is *Satsang* that breaks the cycle of birth and death. It is *Satsang* that gains the treasure

of supreme energy and separates one from the worldly ties immediately.

149. To attain the highest state, the company of a Saint is purifying. If one surrenders completely, our permanent peace is assured.

150. The Saints manifest themselves to grant deliverance to people, who do not recite the name, or bow down, or have faith in them, or sing their praises.

151. Ganga, Bhagirathi, Godavari, Krishna, Venya, Kaveri, Narmada – these rivers also desire that the Saints come and bathe in their waters so that they may touch their feet.

152. They themselves wash the sins of the world (people). But they themselves are not freed from sins until they have touched the feet of the Saints.

153. By my good deeds of many previous lives, I have enjoined myself to the feet of Sai Maharaj. The cycle of birth and death has come to a stand still and the fear of life has disappeared.

154. Now good listeners, let us reflect over what we have heard uptil now. Let us rest now. Further narration will follow later.

155. Hemad surrenders to Sai. I am like the sandal of his foot. I shall go on telling the stories and will be fully happy doing it.

156. Oh how delightful and handsome is the personality that, standing outside the *Masjid*, distributes *udi* to the devotees, one by one, for their welfare.

157. One who realises that the mundane world is illusory, and who is engrossed in the *Brahmanand*, whose mind is like a bud burst open, prostrations to him!

158. The collyrium of knowledge that he puts in the eyes, removes the ignorance and takes you to his own abode. To Sai, whose greatness is such, I prostrate myself fully.

159. The next chapter is better than this one. No sooner than the words enter your heart, through the ears, they will purify the heart and drive away all wickedness.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the tenth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita,* written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called 'The Greatness of Sree Sai Samartha'.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Coin of small demonitional value of British India.
2. The miseries created by men, spiritual difficulties in the path of Self-Realisation

and the troubles caused by natural calamities.

3. Goats and tigers which would be naturally enemical, had faith in him.
4. Laghima is the power to become as small as Lilliput and Mahima or Garima – big as a giant.
5. Over six feet.
6. Good or meritorious deeds.
7. All space.
8. That is, in their daily routine.
9. Six attributes (of God) - a) all-sovereignty or lordship; b) all-goodness or excellence; c) all-glory, majesty, power, d) all-opulence or fulness, e) all-knowledge or understanding; f) absolute exemption from desire or affection (all-dispassionateness).
10. Like the fleshy protruberance hanging down from the neck of goats.
11. Person named Nanavali, a person with a possessed personality, a hefty strong man who had lived for a long time in Shirdi, was wilful, wayward and uncontrolled. He was particular about Baba's *durbar's* arrangements. Depending on his whim, he would embrace someone or slap him. Sometimes he would roll in the wet mud, sometimes dressed like a monkey and making the village children dress likewise, he would come into the assembly hall and create chaos. Sree Samartha and he loved each other very much. One day in his whim he held Baba's hand and made him get up from his seat, sat down on his seat for a moment, then immediately and respectfully made him resume his seat and prostrated himself before him. He used to call Baba as Kaka. After Baba's *samadhi,* he, became so ill that he passed away on the thirteenth day, calling out Kaka, Kaka, as he left his body. In his memory, a monument has been built over his *samadhi* in Shirdi.
12. That is, they remain in the darkness of ignorance.
13. Company of the virtuous.

On such a plank Baba slept. Earthen lamps would burn at his head and his feet. (Ch.10, ovi 16)

11

The Description of Sree Sai's Greatness

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. This is the continuation of the previous narration – Baba's sleeping on a narrow plank – his climbing up and descending, which was inconceivable and difficult to describe.
2. Whether a Hindu or a Muslim, he behaved equally towards both. This became the mission of his life. Such was he, the Lord, who was worshipped in Shirdi.
3. Now this eleventh chapter, consisting of the delightful story of the life of the Guru, I have thought of offering at the feet of Sai, with utmost devotion.
4. By this you will be able to meditate on the manifested form, know how he was worshipped[1] and his control over the five elements. Baba's greatness will thus be understood.
5. Oh listeners! please pay attention, how *Indra*, *Agni* and *Varun* obeyed Baba's commands. I shall now narrate that.
6. Let us remember him with love. He was the personification of non-attachment. Such was his manifested form. He was the refuge of numerous devotees.
7. Honour the words of the Guru and give him a seat in your heart with faith. With complete resolution and abandoning all aspirations let us worship him with only this desire.
8. Guru-raj is even greater than all the seven – image of God, sacrificial altar, fire, supreme light, sun, water, *Brahmin* (those wearing the sacred thread). Let us single mindedly worship him.
9. The devotees of the Guru experience, on resorting to his feet with full faith, that not only Guru but *Parabrahma* is moved. Such is the marvel of Guru *Puja*!

10. As long as the worshipper has a form, then it is essential that the Guru also has a bodily form. For the formless, abstract energy, no bodily form is required. This is what even the *Shastras* emphasise.
11. Unless and until one worships the bodily form, true devotion does not spring forth; and, till there is no such devotion, full of love, the inner mind does not blossom.
12. Unless that blossoms, only the lotus bud does not have either the fragrance or the honey. You will see that even the bee will not pause there for a moment.
13. That which has attributes (*satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) is with form; that which has no attributes is without form. Both are not different from each other. The formless and the one with the form are one.
14. Though frozen, it is *ghee* only, and when it melts it is also called *ghee*. The concrete and the abstract are one and the same, and the abstract is spread in the form of the universe.
15. Whosoever one can feast one's eyes on, on whose feet one can rest one's head, on whom one can meditate suitably, love develops there.
16. In whose company one can chat lovingly, and who can be worshipped with *sandal-wood* paste and rice, coloured with turmeric and *kumkum*, for that a form is a necessity.
17. It is really easy to understand the nature of a bodily form rather than the formless. Once love for the *saguna* increases, it is the awakening for the formless (abstract).
18. Baba would evolve various means to enable the devotees to experience the abstract. By his authority, he would make them sit far and forbade *darshan* for a long time.
19. One would be sent on tour; one would be isolated in Shirdi; one would be confined to the *wada* and made to read the *pothi* regularly.
20. When such a studious training is undergone for a number of years together, then the craving for the abstract will develop. While resting, sleeping and eating, one would then enjoy Baba's company mentally.
21. The body is perishable certainly. It is going to come to an end, at some point of time. Therefore, the devotees should not feel distressed but should concentrate on the eternal.
22. This manifold perceivable world is the manifestation of the unknown (or invisible). It has taken shape or form from the invisible and will return to the invisible.

23. The universe which has evolved from *Brahman*, with each part having the same divine essence as the whole, will also be assimilated with the invisible from where it has taken birth.
24. Therefore, no being dies. Then how can there be death for Baba? - Sree Sai is always pure, enlightened, perfect and untouched by death.
25. Some may call him a devotee of God; some may call him a great Soul; but for us he is truly the very embodiment of the Lord.
26. The Ganga flows to meet the ocean, and on the way she cools those who are distressed by the oppressive heat; gives life to the trees on the banks, and quenches everyone's thirst.
27. Similar is the manifestation of the Saints. They appear and disappear. But their behaviour purifies the world.
28. Of an extremely forgiving temperament, soft spoken, gentle, tolerant, and also incomparably contented,
29. outwardly though possessing a form, yet he is without a form, without qualities (of passion). He is without attachments and within him, he is liberated, though he lives an ordinary life.
30. Krishna who is himself God, says "A Saint is as it were, my soul, my living image and a Saint is my beloved and is myself.
31. It is not befitting to call Saints as my images. Saints are undoubtedly my own Self. Therefore, for their sake, I shoulder the burdens of the devotees.
32. One who completely surrenders to the Saints, I also bow down to his feet". So said Sree Krishna to Uddhava while describing the greatness of the Saints.
33. One who is the most virtuous amongst the virtuous; the one without a form amongst the formless, the one who excels amongst those endowed with excellence, he is the king of virtuosity amongst the virtuous.
34. One who is completely satisfied by having fulfilled one's mission (duties); one who is contented because his desires are fulfilled, one who is engrossed in the Self and is beyond pleasures and pain;
35. one who is the glorious form of inner bliss, who can describe that greatness! It is truly indescribable! He is the incarnation of *Brahman*.
36. Or is it this indescribable power which has manifested itself on this earth – the incarnation of the *Sat-Chit-Anand* ? He is the treasure of knowledge.
37. One who is absolute *Brahman*, in every respect; one who is detached

from all mundane existence (*samsar*) – permanently non-attached, in a state of oneness with *Brahman*, and incarnation of bliss.

38. *'Brahman* is Bliss', the *Shrutis* say. Listeners have heard this often. The learned read this in the scriptures. The devotees experience this in Shirdi.

39. This world (*samsar*) is utterly unique. It has both the righteous and the wicked elements. Those who do not have the knowledge of the Self need to be protected from such a world at every moment.

40. But this is not a problem for those who are Self-realised. They have a refuge in their Inner Self. They are always liberated, full of bliss, and engrossed in the Supreme Being.

41. Baba is the abiding abode of all. Why would he need a seat? That also a silver one? But it is only because of Baba's devotees' desires.

42. For a long time, there was an old seat – which was a piece of sack cloth. On that, the loving devotees had put a nice matress for him to sit.

43. Against the wall, behind, on which he rested, the devotees put a bolster. Baba abided by the devotees' wishes.

44. Though his residence appeared to be in Shirdi, he was all-pervasive. This was always experienced by his devotees, by Sai's powers.

45. Though immutable, he accepted the worship and honours (rituals), according to the faith of the devotees. He accepted (the devotion) in all the different ways.

46. Some waved the whisks – some fanned – some played *shehnai* or drums and auspicious musical instruments and some offered *puja*.

47. Some would lave his hands and feet (to drink the water as *tirth*) – some annointed him with *attar* and *sandal-wood* paste – some offered him betelnuts made out of thirteen ingredients[2] – some offered *mahanaivedya* [3].

48. Some applied *gandh* paste, with two fingers, horizontally across the forehead, as it is done for Shiva linga, without a break – some applied *kasturi* mixed with perfume – and also, applied *sandal-wood*.

49. On one occasion Tatyasaheb Noolkar's friend, by the name of Dr. Pandit came to Shirdi only once to take Sai Baba's *darshan*.

50. No sooner than he arrived at Shirdi, he went first to the *Masjid* and after doing obeisance to Baba, sat quietly for a moment.

51. Baba then said to him: "Go to Dada Bhat's. Go, go this way", showing the way with the fingers of his hand.

52. Pandit went to Dada's. Dada gave him a suitable welcome. Then when Dada set out for Baba's worship, he asked him if he would come along.

53. Pandit accompanied Dada. Dada worshipped Baba. Till then no one had dared apply fragrant paste (*gandh*) *tilak* (circular, auspicious mark on the forehead) to Baba.

54. Whosoever may be the devotee, he would not allow him to apply the fragrant paste to his forehead. Only Mhalsapati smeared it on his throat; others applied it to his feet.

55. But this Pandit was simple and full of devotion. He took away Dada's *puja thali* , and holding Sree Sai's head, he annointed him with the three fingered parallel lines; (*tripunda*).

56. Seeing his daring, Dada's heart began to beat hard. He thought that Baba would be enraged. What a rash act this was!

57. Thus the impossible had happened! Baba did not utter a word. On the contrary he seemed quite pleased and did not get angry with him at all.

58. So be it. He let that moment pass. But Dada felt a disquietude. Then, that same day's end he asked Baba about it.

59. "When we try to apply a small tilak of paste to your forehead, you do not allow us to touch your forehead – but what happened this morning?

60. "You dislike our *tilak*. Yet Pandit's *tripundara* was found favourable! Why this unusual behaviour? There seems to be some inconsistency".

61. Then very lovingly Sai smiled and spoke to Dada. Listen to that sweet remark with devotion, all of you.

62. "Dada, his Guru is a Brahmin. I am by caste a Mussalman. But believing me to be his Guru, he did Guru *puja*.

63. "I am a great, pious Brahmin. He is an unholy *Yavan* (Muslim). How should he be worshipped? He had no such doubts.

64. "This is how he ensnared me. There I had no alternative. There was no room to raise any objection. He overwhelmed me".

65. Though such a reply was heard, Dada took it lightly. But the essence was realised when Dada returned (home).

66. This inconsistency of Baba greatly hurt Dada. But, while talking to Pandit, his doubts were immediately clarified.

Raghunath Dopeshwar alias Kaka Puranik

67. Pandit was enjoined to the feet of Raghunath, a sage from Dhopeshwar, well known as 'Kaka Puranik'. The deep relationship was that of a disciple.

68. He invoked Kaka. He experienced such a feeling (that Baba was one with Kaka). As per one's faith, devotion is rewarded.

69. So be it. He would get all the rituals done if only he so desired. Otherwise he would throw away the *puja thalis* and he would become 'Narasimhan Incarnate' (display wrath).

70. When he displayed this nature, who would be so courageous as to withstand it? Everyone would run for their lives when he was furious.

71. Suddenly, at times, he is furious and full of fire and brimstone, with his devotees; sometimes, he is softer than wax – the image of peace and forgiveness.

72. At times, he resembles an erupted volcano (fire at the time of destruction), and would keep the devotees at the razor's edge (hold them in mortal fear); at times he is softer than butter, and shines with bliss.

73. Even if he trembles with rage and rolls his eyes, round and round, but within his heart there is a spring of kindness like a mother's towards her child.

74. Within a moment when he resumes his normal behaviour (after his anger subsides) he would call his devotees by name and say: "When I get angry with anyone, I am not aware of it.

75. "If a mother kicks her child, or the ocean rolls back the water of the rivers, then only would I scornfully neglect you and would harm you.

76. "I am under my devotees' obligations. I am always beside them (standing close). I am always hungry for love. I am at their beck and call".

77. In the course of writing this part of the narration, I am reminded of an apt story, which is exemplary. Listen to it with respect.

78. Once a Muslim, resident of Kalyan, by the name of Siddique Falke, after a pilgrimage to Mecca – Medina, arrived at Shirdi.

79. That old Haji stayed in the *Chavadi* [4] facing the north. For the first nine months Baba was displeased with him and was not ready to meet him.

80. The auspicious hour did not come for him. His wearisome trips

were futile (i.e. between the north *Chavadi* and the *Masjid*). He tried different ways and means but could never exchange glances (with Baba).

81. The *Masjid* was always open to everyone. No one was debarred or prohibited. But that Falke had no permission to mount the steps of the *Masjid*.

82. Falke became internally dejected. 'What kind of *karmas* have been instrumental that my steps cannot enter the *Masjid*. What sins have I committed?

83. By what turn of events, will Baba be propitious towards me and come forward towards me' – that was the sole thought, day and night, in Falke's mind, like the throbbing of his own heart.

84. In the meanwhile, somebody advised him not to be dejected like this: 'Take Madhavrao's help and your heart's desire will be fulfilled'.

85. Before taking Nandi's *darshan*, can Shankar become propitious? He approved of following this method and liked the idea of using this means.

86. On the face of it, the listeners will think this to be an exaggeration. But, this was the experience, in Shirdi, at the time of darshan.

87. Whoever desired to be with Baba, without any disturbance, to have a dialogue, he was required to go with Madhavrao, at the outset.

88. Who has come, from where, and wherefor? – for the purpose of telling all this in a sweet and suitable manner and to introduce (Madhavrao was required). Then Samartha became willing to talk.

89. The Haji heard all this and persuaded Madhavrao. He said: "Once, at least, dispel my turmoil. Help me to attain the unattainable".

90. With this pressure on Madhavrao to find a suitable opportunity, he made a firm decision. Whether the task was difficult or not, he would make an effort.

91. He plucked up courage and went to the *Masjid*. He broached the subject very delicately. "Baba, that old man is greatly distressed. Please oblige him.

92. "That Haji has come to Shirdi for your *darshan* after doing the Mecca – Medina pilgrimage. How can you not be merciful to him? And not allow him to come into the *Masjid* ?

93. "Innumerable persons come, freely enter the *Masjid*, take *darhsan* and leave quickly. Why is only this one languoring in vain?

94. "Be merciful towards him, just once. Meet him in the *Masjid*. Then, he will also leave quickly, after asking the question in his heart".

95. "Shama, the infant's spume has not yet even dried on your lips. If Allah's grace is not with him, what can I do for him?

96. "If he does not have an indebtedness of *Allah-miya*, can anyone climb (the steps of) the *Masjid* ?! The Fakir's actions are beyond understanding. And I have no control over them.

97. "So be it. There is a narrow foot path beyond the Barvi well. Go and ask him clearly if he will walk and come there correctly".

98. The Haji said: "However difficult it may be, I will walk correctly. But grant me a personal meeting, and let me sit near his feet".

99. Listening to the answer from Shama, Baba said, "Ask him further: Four times forty thousand rupees, will you give to me?"

100. When Madhavrao gave him this message, the Haji said: "What are you asking? If he asks, I will give forty lakhs! Where lies the question of thousands!"

101. Listening to this answer, Baba said: "Ask him. To-day we have a desire to slaughter a goat in our *Masjid*. What part of the meat, do you wish.

102. "Would he like bones with flesh, haunch or testicles? Go and ask that old man, what he definitely wants".

103. Madhavrao related in detail to the Haji whatever Baba had said. Haji emphatically said: "I need nothing of all that.

104. "Give me whatever he wishes. But I have only one desire. If I only get a morsel from the *kolamba* [5] I will have attained my object and my well-being".

105. Madhavrao returned with this response from the Haji. While he was presenting this statement, Baba became wild with anger immediately.

106. Picking up the *kolamba* and the water pot in his own hands he threw them out of the door. Biting his hand noisily, he came near the Haji.

107. Holding his *kafni* with both hands and lifting it up, he stood in front of the Haji and said: "What do you think yourself to be? Are you boasting in front of me?

108. "You are giving yourself airs because of your age! Is that the way you recite the *Koran*! You are vain because you have done the pilgrimage to Mecca! But you do not realise who I am!"

109. In this manner he was reproached, using unspeakable words! The Haji was dumbfounded. Baba then turned back.

110. While entering the courtyard of the *Masjid*, he saw the gardener's wife selling mangoes. He purchased all the baskets and sent them immediately to the Haji.

111. In the same way, he turned back immediately, and went again towards that Haji. He took out Rs. 55/- from the pocket and counted them on his (Haji's) hands.

112. Thereafter, there developed affection. The Haji was invited to eat and both of them forgot all the past. The Haji was delightfully blissful.

113. Then he left and frequently came again. He took full pleasure in Baba's affection. Then Baba gave him gifts of monies, from time to time.

114. May that be whatsoever. Once I was astounded to see Sai Samartha exercise his authority over the clouds and saw him praying to Indra[6].

115. It was a very frightful time. The entire sky was black and overcast. Birds and beasts were frightened. A hurricane-like wind began to blow.

116. The sun set and it was evening. Suddenly the whirlwind arose. Strong gusty winds blew. There was an irresistible commotion,

117. accompanied by peals of thunder, crackling of lightening, shrieking winds and torrential rains.

118. It rained cats and dogs, hailstones noisily descended, the village folk and the cattle had a fearful anticipation and cried and bellowed, creating a loud commotion.

119. Destitute beggars came for shelter under the eaves of the *Masjid* and were joined by the cattle and the calves. The *Masjid* was crowded.

120. There was water in all the quarters. The hay was completely washed away. The harvest was totally wet in the threshing ground. People were struck aghast.

121. The whole village was frightened and worried. They came in and filled the courtyard of the *Masjid* and some stayed under the eaves. They put forth their grievance to Baba.

122. Shirdi abounded in temples of Jogai, Jakhai, Mariai, Shani, Shankar, Ambabai, Maruti, Khandoba, Mhalsai.

123. Yet, at any critical juncture, no one was of any service to the villagers except the one and only, prompt and quick Sai, who helped in all difficulties.

124. He did not need sacrifices of goats and cocks, nor offerings of money. All that he desired was true devotion to sweep away all difficulties.

125. Maharaj was greatly moved by seeing the panic of the people. He left his seat and came forward and stood near the plinth of the *Masjid*.

126. The sky was reverberating with the sound of thunder and the crackling lightening set the sky ablaze with light. In the midst of all this stood Sai Maharaj, shouting at the top of his voice.

127. Gods love their devotees and their Saints and Sages more than themselves. Gods heed their words and take human birth for their sake.

128. Gods have to espouse the cause of the devotees on hearing their appeals. They uphold all requests as soon as they are made, recalling the faith of the devotees.

129. Loud bawls followed one after another, resounding in the sky. The *Masjid* seemed to shake. Everyone was deafened.

130. The *Masjid* and the temples resounded with that earth-shaking voice. Then the clouds stopped their own thunder and even the rains stopped pouring.

131. Baba's loud bawling was so profuse that the whole courtyard full of people got rooted to the spot, whispering amongst itself.

132. Baba's skill and powers were inconceivable. It had an effect on the rains. The wind also was immediately controlled and the darkness caused by the fog was dissipated.

133. Slowly, slowly the rain decreased. The wind also lessened. The constellations became visible. The darkness was dispelled by that time.

134. Later the rains completely stopped. The galing winds quietened. The moon appeared in the sky. Everyone was cheered.

135. Indra melted at the plight and upheld the words of the Saint. The clouds were dispersed in all directions. The whirlwind calmed down.

136. The rains totally abated. The wind blew gently. The sound of thunder subsided. The birds and beasts regained their courage.

137. Leaving the shelter of the eaves, the cattle and calves came out and roamed again without fear. The birds also flew into the sky.

138. Having earlier experienced the terryfying incident, all the people returned to their homes after expressing their gratitude to Baba. The cattle also peacefully dispersed.

139. Such was Sai, the embodiment of mercy! He had great love for the devotees. His concern was like that of a mother for the children. How can I describe that loving nature!

140. Similarly, he had control over the fire. Listeners. Please listen with respect to a short story, as an example. You will realise the unexcelled power.

141. One afternoon the *dhuni* blazed uncontrollably. The flames billowed. Who could stay near it?

142. The flames of the fire increased fiercely and reached the roof of wooden beams. It appeared that the *Masjid* would quickly be reduced to ashes, as at the burning of Holi.

143. Nevertheless, Baba was composed while all the people became apprehensive. All the people were amazed at the ruination Baba was facing.

144. One asked: "Shall we bring some water?" Another said: "Who will pour it? Who will go near there to receive the blow of the *satka* on the head?"

145. Though everybody was restless, none had the courage to ask. At that moment, Baba made a movement and placed his hand on the satka.

146. Seeing the blazing flames, he took the satka in his hand and started forcefully striking, blow after blow, saying "Get back".

147. An arm's length from the dhuni, he was forcefully striking the pillar, while looking at the flames and saying: "Calm down, calm down".

148. With every stroke, the flames lessened and subsided. The *dhuni* became calm and the fear disappeared completely.

149. Such was Sai, the Doyen of the Saints, God Incarnate! On placing your head at his feet, he will lay the boon-giving hand on your head.

150. Whosoever reads this chapter regularly, with faith and devotion, all the problems will be resolved after the completion of the reading with concentration.

151. What more can I say! After purifying the mind, scrupulously do the Sai *pārāyan*! You will attain eternal *Brahman*.

152. Attain the unattainable! Ultimately become desireless! Attain the difficult four-fold *mukti* and uninterrupted peace.

153. So be it. Those devotees who desire to enjoy the bliss of *parmartha* and perfect knowledge should read this chapter repeatedly, with great respect.

154. The minds will be purified. Savouring the stories will develop an attitude of spiritual inclinations. They will attain whatever is desired and whatever is not auspicious or desirable will be destroyed. Personally experience Baba.

155. Hemadpant surrenders to Sai. The next chapter is very sacred about the relationship of the Guru and the disciple, *darshan* of Gholap by the Guru *putra*.

156. No matter what the circumstances, the disciple should never abandon his own *Gurudev*. Sai gave specific experiences of this and increased the firm faith.

157. Those devotees, who came and surrendered, each had the unique *darshan* in different forms (of deities and/or Gurus) and their faith was confirmed.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the eleventh chapter, of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Description of Sree Sai's Greatness".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. With Hymns offered to *Rudra*, eleven times.
2. *Supari*, White Kat, Cloves, Nutmeg, Saffron, Dry coconut, Camphor, *Kankol*, Jaipatri, Cardamom, Almond, *Kasturi*, Lime.
3. Wide variety of delicious foods, which could be as many as sixty items.
4. There are two *Chavadis* in Shirdi – one faces the north and one faces the south. They face one another.
5. The mud pot into which all offerings of *naivedya* were placed and also the food which Baba begged as alms.
6. King of the Gods.

Seeing the blazing flames, he took the *satka* in his hand and started forcefully striking, blow after blow, saying "Get back". (Ch.11, ovi 146)

12

The Darshan of Ram - Sree Sant Gholap

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Hail! hail to the *Sadguru* Sainatha! I bow down and place my head at your feet. You who are Immutable, Eternal and One with *Brahman*, have mercy on the one who has surrendered.
2. *Sachhidananda*, Treasure House of Bliss, Grantor of Happiness to those who are scorched by the troubles of the world, Destroyer of Duality by the knowledge of *advaita*, even for those who are slow of understanding.
3. Those who are experienced and are fortunate have delineated your image and spread it like the sky in every nook and corner.
4. God appears on earth to protect the virtuous and to annihilate the evil. *Saints* however are different.
5. For the Saints, the virtuous and the evil are the same. They do not know the difference between the great and the lowly. For them, both are the same.
6. Saints are greater than God. They set the evil-doers on the right path. Their hearts ache with love and compassion for the suffering.
7. They are akin to Agasti *Rishi* [1], for the ocean of existence. They are like the Sun which dispels the darkness of ignorance. God lives in them. In essence, they are one and the same.
8. My Sai is one such! He has manifested for the sake of his devotees – the embodiment of knowledge, in whom the lustre of divinity is firmly established.
9. He had great love for all living creatures, yet he was totally detached. Though he had powers, he cared nothing for them. He had no animosity towards anyone and treated all alike.

10. He, who had no feelings of enmity or friendship and treated the king and the pauper alike, such was Sai, the Magnanimous! Listen to the Majesty of Sai!
11. Saints expend their store of merit for the love of their devotees. They leap over wells, mountains and valleys for the sake of their devotees.
12. The ignorant do not understand what is *parmartha*. They are only involved in wife, progeny and wealth. Leave those who do not understand, alone.
13. Those who are inexperienced and innocent, God mercifully caresses them. But those who are turned away from God, their pride sears them from within.
14. If a Saint becomes fond and takes pity on the ignorant, immense faith will be developed. The pride of knowledge will be futile.
15. Foolish pedagogues unnecessarily swell with pride of their dry knowledge. They scorn the way of devotion. Shun their company.
16. Revolt arising from tumultous intermixture of castes is not needed. False pleas of the pride of high caste is not needed. Do not become an overbearing bully on account of the four castes or *dharma*. Do not become a heterodox *pandit*.
17. There is no hopeful state for the learned in *Vedas* and *Vedanta* or those full of pride in their learning. This comes in the way of the path of devotion.
18. The ignorant, with the might of faith, will cross the ocean of existence. But the enigmas of those learned in the *Shashtras* stand no such chance.
19. The nescience of the ignorant disappears and the problems arising from doubts of those proud of their learning will be removed and purity of mind will be born, if they place their faith in Saints and surrender.
20. May that be whatsoever! On one occasion, due to the workings of good fortune, a strange incident happened. It was written in the destiny of an orthodox Brahmin to have a rare meeting with Sai.
21. His objective was different. By divine coincidence he had the opportunity of coming to Shirdi and to see his own Guru.
22. Listen to this very interesting tale which illustrates the greatness of the Guru and disciple.
23. An *Agnihotri* [2], surnamed Muley, an orthodox and pious resident of Nashik, came to Shirdi once, on the strength of his earlier spiritual merits.

24. If he did not have that strength (of these merits), no one could stay a moment in Shirdi. No matter how strong the determination, only Baba's will prevailed.
25. One could think, 'I will go and stay there as long as I like'. But it did not depend on his choice. He was under total control.
26. Many egotists were humbled when making such decisions, and making pronouncements of 'I, I'. Sai was an unfettered entity.
27. Till our turn comes, Baba does not think of us. When we do not even hear of his virtues, how can the desire for *darshan* arise?
28. Many had longed for Sai Samartha's *darshan*, but none got the opportunity till Sai's *Nirvan* [3].
29. Having continued to postpone the visit and procrastinated, many found it was too late, as Baba had passed away.
30. They kept deferring the matter from to-day to tomorrow and so on. Ultimately they were deprived of the chance of a face-to-face meeting and repented for it. The *darshan* was irrevocably lost.
31. The craving of such people will be partially fulfilled by listening to these stories with reverence and faith. They will have to be content with minor acquisitions [4].
32. Those who went in good time, by good fortune, and were able to take *darshan* and touch his feet, were content, but did they stay there at their sweet will? Baba had to allow them.
33. None could go there of his own will or stay there at his own will. If allowed, then only could he stay, and left when told to go.
34. On one occasion, Kaka Mahajani went to Shirdi from Bombay. He intended to stay for one week at Shirdi and then return.

Laxman Ganesh alias Kaka Mahajani

35. It was at the time of the festival of the birth of Lord Krishna. The *chavadi* was beautifully decorated. The cradle was hung before Baba and the devotees were dancing with joy.
36. Kaka arrived at Shirdi at the opportune time of the *Gokul Ashtami* festivities, desiring to enjoy and witness the festival.
37. Immediately on going for Baba's *darshan*, Baba asked him: "When are you returning to your home?" Kaka was astonished.
38. Kaka was surprised and perplexed at this question being asked at the first moment of the meeting, because he had intended to stay at Shirdi for eight days.

39. When Baba himself has asked, it was obligatory for Kaka to answer. As if Baba himself suggested the answer, he gave a suitable reply.
40. "When Baba grants permission, I will return to my home". When Kaka gave the reply, Baba said: "Go tomorrow".
41. Obeying the order with profound reverence, bowing down to Baba, he departed the same day inspite of the *Ashtami* festival.
42. Later on when he returned to the town and went to his office, he found that his employer was eagerly awaiting Kaka's return.
43. The *Munim* had suddenly taken ill and the employer needed Kaka. He had sent a letter to Shirdi to Kaka, recalling him.
44. After Kaka had left from Shirdi, the postman had inquired and the letter was re-directed, which was received by Kaka at home.
45. Now, listen to this short story which is the exact opposite of the one just narrated. Devotees did not realise their own good but Sai knew it clearly.
46. Bhausaheb Dhumal, a well-known advocate of Nashik, who was one of Baba's ardent followers, came only for Baba's *darshan*.
47. He intended to take a hurried *darshan*, bow down at his feet, take *udi* and blessings and return.
48. On his way back, Dhumal had to stop at Niphad. It was necessary for him to go there, for the hearing of a case.

Bhausaheb Dhumal

49. Although this was his plan, Baba knew what was right and wrong. When he asked for permission to return, Baba did not give it to him.
50. He kept him for a week. He emphatically denied him permission. The hearing was postponed. This happened thrice.
51. Dhumal was detained for more than a week. The judge had become unwell on the day of the hearing.
52. The judge had severe stomach ache such as he had never experienced in his life. The hearing was naturally postponed and Dhumal's time was spent fruitfully.
53. So be it. Dhumal was able to enjoy Sai's company. The client's anxieties were over. This happened without any efforts, having faith in Sai.
54. Later on, at the right time, Dhumal was given permission. All his work was accomplished satisfactorily. Strange are Sai's deeds!

Nanasaheb Nimonkar

55. The case continued for four months, during which time four judges were changed. But finally, came success. The accused was acquitted as being not guilty.
56. Listen, how once Baba took the side of the wife of Nanasaheb Nimonkar, a great devotee; and, the way it was done.
57. He was the holder of hereditary rights in Nimon village. The Government had appointed him magistrate. He was a very influential person.
58. He was Madhavrao's eldest uncle. He was old but an honoured person. His wife was very sincere and devout. Sai was their life's governing deity.
59. Having left their ancestral village, both had settled in Shirdi. Having full faith in Sai, they lived amicably.
60. Getting up before sunrise, they took bath and said their prayers and came to the *chavadi* to do the morning (*Kakad*) *arati*.
61. Later, he would say his *stotras*. Nana would stay near Baba till sunset, always engrossed in Baba's service.
62. He would take Baba to the Lendi and bring him back to the *Masjid*. With a heart full of love, he would do any service that was required.
63. Even his wife would serve Baba, in whatever way it was possible for her, full of great devotion, for the live long day, there.
64. They would use their dwelling only for their baths, meals, cooking etc. or sleeping at night.
65. The loving couple spent all their time, morning, noon, afternoon and evening, near Baba; that is, all the remaining time.
66. May that be whatsoever. If I go on describing the services of both of them, this book will become exceedingly lengthy. Therefore, I shall relate only that part which is relevant to the present subject.
67. The lady had to go to Belapur as her son was slightly unwell there. She made her preparations to go there in consultation with her husband.
68. Later, Baba was consulted, as per the usual custom; and, as soon as Baba gave an affirmative reply, she told her husband.
69. So be it. It was thus finally decided to go to Belapur. But then Nana said that she should return the very next day.
70. Nana had some reason. Therefore he told her to go but return immediately. So his wife was in two minds.
71. The next day was the *Amavas* of the Pola Festival[5]. To spend that

day also there, was therefore the lady's desire. But Nana was not agreeable.

72. Besides, it was not considered right to travel to or from a place as it was *Amavasya*. Therefore, she faced a dilemma and did not know how to solve it.

73. She could not be satisfied without going to Belapur. Nor could she hurt her husband's feelings. The question of disobeying did not even arise.

74. So be it. She made her preparations and set out to go to Belapur. Baba was on his way to Lendi and she bowed down to him.

75. Before starting upon a journey, it is customary to bow down before God and pray to remove all obstacles on the way. This was also the tradition followed in Shirdi.

76. But Sai was the deity there. Even if there was a hurry to leave, at the time of departure, they would bow down at his feet.

77. In keeping with this practice, when Baba was standing in front of Sathe's *wada*, for a moment, the lady bowed at his feet.

78. Nanasaheb Nimonkar, and others, big and small, who had gathered there to get a quick *darshan*, also greeted Baba.

79. In front of such a group gathered there, and specially in the presence of Nana, mark what Baba told the lady, with presence of mind.

80. When she placed her head at his feet and asked permission to leave, Baba said: "Go early, as soon as you can. Take it easy.

81. "Now that you are going, stay at Belapur for four days at leisure. After meeting everyone and making inquires, return to Shirdi".

82. So be it. Baba's words gave unimaginable peace of mind to the lady. Nimonkar also got the hint. Both of them were satisfied.

83. In short, when we plan we do not know the totality of the situation. The Saints know where lies our welfare and where not. There is nothing that they do not know.

84. The past, present and future is all clearly perceived by them, just as one can read the palm of one's own hand. Devotees are benefitted if they behave according to their guidance.

85. So be it. Now we will revert to the original story and narrate how Muley was blessed and given the *darshan* of his Guru.

86. Muley had intended to meet *Shriman* Bapusaheb Butti and to return immediately.

87. So be it. E ven though this was his intention, Baba had a different plan. Listen attentively to that miracle and its covert object.

88. He met *Shriman*. Then the group headed for the *Masjid*. Muley also felt like accompanying them and he joined them.

89. Muley had studied all the six *Shastras*. He was adroit in astrology and proficient in palmistry. He was enthralled by the *darshan*.

90. *Pedas*, *batasas*, *burfi* [6], coconuts, fruits such as oranges were being offered to Baba by his beloved and innocent devotees, in abundance.

91. Besides, female fruit vendors also came there. Baba purchased rose-apples, bananas, sugar cane, as he thought fit, with his own money.

92. He also spent his money to buy baskets of mangoes and got lots of bananas and he distributed them to the devotees to his heart's content.

93. He would take a mango, one by one, would hold between his palms, pummel it till it became soft and then gave it in the hands of the devotees.

94. Once the lips touched the mango, the juice would flow directly to the stomach, as from a bowl, and then the skin and the stone could be discarded.

95. In the case of bananas it was an unusual manner. The pulp was given to the devotees and Baba would eat the skin thereof. Oh! How wonderful were his deeds!

96. Baba distributed all these fruits with his own hands to everyone. Occasionally, if he felt like it, he would himself taste some.

97. As was the practice, that day Baba was distributing to his devotees a basket of bananas which he had bought.

98. Shastrybuva Mule was greatly surprised when he saw Baba's feet. He desired to observe the *'dhwaja, vajra* and *ankush* '[7] lines on Baba's soles.

99. At that moment, Baba's devotee Kakasaheb Dixit was nearby. He picked up four bananas and placed them in Baba's hands.

100. Somebody earnestly pleaded with Baba: "Baba, this Muley Shastry who resides in a holy place, has attained your feet due to his merits. Won't you give these fruits to him as *prasad* ?"

101. Entreaties or no entreaties! Unless it occurred to Baba himself, he would never give anything to anybody or do anything.

102. Muley asked for his hand and not the bananas, for which he stretched out his hand. Baba paid no attention to it and kept on distributing the *prasad*.

103. Muley pleaded with Baba: "I don't want fruits, but give me your hand". He said: "I know palmistry." Baba did not give him his hand.
104. In spite of that, Muley edged forward and stretched his hand to read the palm. Baba ignored him completely as if he was not concerned.
105. Baba put the four bananas into Muley's outstretched hand and asked him to sit down but did not give his hand into Muley's.
106. Sairaya, whose all desires were fulfilled and who had worn out his body in the service of the Lord, what need did he have for palmistry? He who was both mother and father to his devotees!
107. Noticing Baba's detached nature, and his indifference to palmistry, Shatry buva drew back his hand and desisted from further importunating him.
108. For a while he sat quietly, then went to the *wada* along with the rest of the group, took his bath, wore the *sovala*[8] and started doing *Agnihotra*.
109. On the other hand, as was his custom, Baba started for the Lendi. He said : "Take some ochre powder with you. I wish to wear saffron coloured garments".
110. Everyone was surprised. What would Baba do with ochre powder? Everyone started thinking why was he reminded of ochre colour today?
111. Baba's words are euphemistic. What meaning could one derive? But if you bear them in mind after listening, the correct meaning would be revealed (in due course of time).
112. Such are the words of Saints which are never futile. They are full of deep meaning. Who can evaluate them?
113. First is the thought, then the speech. This is their normal practice. The conduct of the Saints is exactly in accordance with their speech.
114. According to the well-known principle, the words of Saints are never meaningless. If we keep them in mind, at the right time they will become clear.
115. So be it. Baba returned. The horn began to blow, as an indication. Bapusaheb Jog quickly made a timely suggestion to Muley.
116. "It is time for the *Arati*. Would you like to come along to the *Masjid*?" But Shastrybuva found it a rather difficult situation because of his ideas of purity and cleaniness, as associated with his '*sovala*'
117. In response, he said: "I will take *darshan* later in the afternoon". Then Jog started to make preparations for the *arati*.

118. Meanwhile, Baba had returned and resumed his seat, while chatting. Then everybody whose individual *puja* had finished gathered at the venue for the *arati*.
119. Just at that time, Baba said: "Go and bring *dakshina* from the newly arrived Brahmin." Immediately, Bapusaheb Butti himself left to ask for the *dakshina*.
120. Just then, Muley had finished his bath, worn his *sovala*, and was seated cross-legged, with a calm and tranquil mind.
121. When he received the message, Muley had vacillation. "Why should I give *dakshina*, when I am a pure *agnihotri* ?
122. "Maybe, Baba is a great Saint. But am I under his obligation in any way? Why is he asking for *dakshina* from me?" He began wavering thereby.
123. However, a person like Sai was asking for *dakshina*. The message was brought by a millionaire. Though Muley was in doubt, he took the *dakshina* along with him.
124. Besides there was a further doubt. How could he interrupt his own worship and go to the *Masjid*. At the same time he could not say no.
125. A sceptic has no peace. His mind is always wavering. For him there is neither this nor that way. His state is like a *Trishanku* [9].
126. Inspite of all this, he finally decided to go. He went inside the courtyard but stood at a distance.
127. Thinking himself holy and pure and the *Masjid* otherwise, how could he go near Baba? He remained at a distance, joined his hands and threw flowers at Baba.
128. At that moment, a miracle took place. In front of his very eyes, Baba disappeared from his seat and in his place there was his revered Guru Gholap[10].
129. For every one else, it was Sai Samartha, as usual, but for Muley's eyes it was Gholapnath though he had expired long ago. Muley was greatly astounded.
130. Although the Guru had actually taken *samadhi,* he had appeared in front of his eyes. Therefore, Muley was greatly bewildered and naturally had doubts.
131. If it was a dream he wasn't sleeping. And if he was awake then, how could he see his Guru in front of him? There was confusion in his mind and he was tongue tied.
132. He pinched himself and said to himself: 'This is not an illusion. Why should I unnecessarily have doubts? I am present here alongwith everybody else.'

133. Muley was originally the devotee of Gholap. Though he was in doubts about Baba, he later on became his firm believer and had no qualms about it.

134. He was a chaste Bramin of the highest order, well-versed in the *Vedas* and *Vedanta*. He was awestruck by the *darshan* of Gholap in the *Masjid*.

135. Later he climbed up the steps, bowed down at the feet of his Guru and stood with folded hands, in total silence, being dumbfounded.

136. When he saw Gholap Swami in saffron clothes and saffron upper garment of *sanyasi*, Muley ran forward and repeatedly embraced his feet.

137. His pride about his high caste was torn to pieces. His vision was cleared, as it were, as soon as he saw his Guru who had attained realisation. He considered himself most fortunate[11].

138. His doubting nature changed. He developed love for Baba. He gazed at Baba's feet with half-closed eyes.

139. The meritorious deeds of many former lives now bore fruit. His eyes had beheld Sai's feet and been bathed with the *charanatirtha* [12]. He felt that his destiny had changed for the better.

140. Many were surprised. What had happened suddenly? From throwing flowers at a distance, here he was laying his head at Baba's feet!

141. Others were reciting Baba's *arati* while Muley was singing the *arati* in Gholap's name, at his loudest voice, and was lost in overwhelming love.

142. All the inhibitions about *sovala* were abandoned and the consciousness about touchability and non-touchability disappeared. He prostrated himself and closed his eyes with joy.

143. When he stood up and opened his eyes, Gholap Swamy had vanished and in his place was Sai Samartha, asking for *dakshina*.

144. Gazing at Baba's blissful form, and realising his inconceivable powers, Muley was awestruck and forgot himself.

145. Such was Maharaj's prowess that having experienced it he lost all interest in food and drink. Muley was deliriously happy because he had the pleasure of *darshan* of his own Guru.

146. He was contented. He prostrated before Baba with his body fully out stretched. With eyes filled with tears of happiness, he put his head on Baba's feet.

147. Whatever *dakshina* he had he gave and again put his head at his feet. His eyes were wet with tears of love and his whole body trembled with intensity of emotion.

148. He was choked with emotions and was overcome with the eight-fold form of devotion[13]. He thought to himself that now all my doubts have resolved and, above all, I have been able to meet my Guru.

149. Everybody, including Muley, was overwhelmed with emotions when they realised Baba's unique leela, understood the significance of 'ochre powder' and realised what had been meant.[14]

150. It was the same Maharaj and the same Muley (yet what a change in the whole situation). What was there to be surprised at this time? Who can ever fathom Baba's ways? His deeds are indeed unfathomable.

151. Similarly, a *Mamlatdar* holding Sai's *darshan* in great respect, set out for Shirdi along with a doctor friend.

152. The doctor was a Brahmin by caste, a devotee of Sree Ram, regular and correct in the observance of prescribed rituals of worship in which he was well-versed.

153. "Sai Baba is a Muslim and I am a devotee of Ram. I will not bow down to him". He told this to his friend beforehand.

154. "As I am not ready to bow down at the feet of a Muslim, I am hesitant from the outset about making a trip to Shirdi".

155. " 'Bow down' – no one will insist on that. Do not have any apprehensions. Do not be prejudiced. Have no doubts about it.

156. Baba would never say: 'Touch my feet' ". Thus assured by the *Mamlatdar*, he decided to proceed.

157. With this firm decision, he agreed to his friend's suggestion and with no misgivings he set out to take *darshan*.

158. But, the moment they arrived in Shirdi and went to the *Masjid* for *darshan*, right at the beginning he himself prostrated. His friend was greatly taken aback.

159. Then he asked him: "How did you forget the resolution and prostrate before a Muslim!?"

160. Upon which the doctor told something marvellous. "I saw the image of the dark-skinned Rama, looking pure, handsome, delicate and lovely. So I immediately bowed down.

161. Look he is still there on the seat and he is talking to everybody". While he was saying so, in a moment he began to see the form of Sai.

162. By which the doctor was astounded and said: "Is it a dream? How can he be called a Muslim? He is an *Avatar* fully accomplished in all the *yogas*.

163. "Chokhamela[15] was a *Mahar*, Rohidas[16] was a Cobbler, Sajjan[17] was a Butcher. Where is the question of their castes?

164. "Renouncing the attributeless and formless nature, the saints manifest themselves in the world only to oblige mankind and help avoiding the cycle of birth and death.

165. "This is truly the *Kalpa* [18] tree. Sai, one moment and Ram, the next. By making me prostrate myself before him, he has punished my ego".

166. The next day he took a vow. Unless Sainath did not grant his grace, he would not put his foot in the *Masjid*. He stayed fasting in Shirdi.

167. Three days passed in this manner. And when the fourth day dawned, listen with rapt attention to what happened then.

168. Unexpectedly, a friend of his who hailed from Khandesh arrived there for Sai's *darshan*.

169. They met after nine years. Their joy knew no bounds. The doctor also went after him unconsciously, into the *Masjid*.

170. As soon as he reached, he prostrated. Baba asked: "O': doctor, did anyone come to call you? Why have you come? Answer me".

171. Hearing this pricking question, the doctor was overcome. He recalled his firm resolve and became penitent.

172. However, that very night, at midnight he was graced and he had the experience of the sweetness of heavenly bliss, during his sleep.

173. Later on, the doctor returned to his own town but continued to experience that completely happy state of mind for a fortnight. His devotion for Sai intensified.

174. Similarly, the numerous experiences of Sai, each better than the other, if related would increase the importance of this book. But the narration will greatly increase, so I will cut it short.

175. The listeners will be surprised by the story of Muley which was told earlier. But you must mark the significance and try to understand the moral of it.

176. Have firm faith in him who is your own Guru; and, it should not be anywhere else. Bear in mind this deep meaning.

177. There does not seem to be any other purpose in the *leela* of Baba. However reflective a person may be, he will derive only this meaning.

178. Others may be more famous and your own Guru may not be at all. But our faith should only be in our own Guru. This is the only lesson from this.

179. If you scan the old scriptures, they are full of the same advice. But if there is no firm conviction, then one's faith does not become effective and is not strengthened.

180. Though some people do not have full confidence in themselves, yet show off as being intent on the Self, their sufferings throughout their life can be seen at every step.

181. Neither do they fulfil their desires here, nor do they attain freedom beyond. Till the end of life they go on worrying. They still brag about freedom without having experienced even a moment of quietude.

182. Enough of this. The pleasure you will get from the next chapter will be better than this. Simply by taking frequent *darshan* of Sai, one has unlimited happiness.

183. How *Bhakta* Bhimaji Patil's tuberculosis was cured and his faith in *Bhakta* Chandorkar was strengthened by giving him a vision.

184. Such is the power of that *darshan* that the sins are washed away, worldly pleasures are limited and rewards in the other world are granted infinitely.

185. When a *yogi* casts a glance on an atheist, even he is freed from his sins. Then what can be said for a believer! His sins are most easily washed away.

186. If there is one, whose mind is steady and has experienced indirect realisation, and then if he beholds him with his eyes, his insurmountable sins are wiped out.

187. Such is Baba's nature which is incomprehensible. Baba is loving to you all. Therefore, the learned and the ignorant all listen with a pure mind.

188. Where there is a soul of love and devotion, where people are affectionately attached to Baba, there a tender yearning will manifest and there will be the pleasure of listening.

189. Hemad bows down at the feet of Sai which are a haven of refuge for those who have whole-heartedly surrendered. He is capable of destroying the fear of this world, having limitless powers.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the twelfth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita* written by devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The *Darshan* of Ram – Sree Sant Gholap".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. He drank up the ocean, by taking the water in his palm, on one occasion.
2. Person who performs worship with the help of fire, at sunrise and sunset, as laid down in the *Shastras*.
3. *Maha Samadhi*.
4. In Marathi, it is said that they will have buttermilk instead of milk.
5. The annual festival for the worship of bullocks, which falls on the dark night of the moon, in the month of *Shravan*.
6. Various kinds of sweetmeats.
7. The marks of the flag, the weapon of India (the thunderbolt) and the goad which are found on the feet of an *Avatar*.
8. A silk cloth which is considered pure and is worn after bath for the purpose of *puja* by orthodox Brahmins. Once it is worn, the person does not touch any object, because everything else is regarded as impure.
9. A disciple of Vishwamitra who could not gain entrance to heaven nor return to earth and was suspended in between.
10. He was known as Baba Gholap and lived in Nasik. He was well versed in the *Shastras* and was an *Agnihotra*.
11. As if he had received Kuber's treasures.
12. Water from the washings of Baba's feet.
13. The devotee perspires, becomes silent, experiences horripilation, voice changes, trembles, changes colour, sheds tears and becomes unconscious.
14. Refer to ovi 109.
15. Man of low status who was the contemporary of Dñyaneshwar and Namdev. He lived in Mangalvedha and was a Pandurang *bhakta*. He built a stone pillar to support lamps in front of the temple and lived there as he could not gain entry into the temple. His *abhangs* are very famous.
16. Person of low status.
17. Worshipper of Lord Vishnu. He travelled to Jagannath Puri. On the way, due to a false accusation of a woman, his hands were cut off by court order but when he reached Puri, the Lord welcomed him and as he joined the stumps of hands in obeisance, the hands were restored to him.
18. Wish-fulfilling tree.

13

The Cure of Bhimaji's Tuberculosis

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Baba's words were short like the *Vedas*, pithy, deep and full of meaning, very comprehensive, but compressed.
2. They were deep in meaning and very exact. They were never futile. They were balanced and priceless.
3. Remain aware and alert to your past and future. Accept your fate and manage within your means. Always be contented. Fret over nothing.
4. "Oh! though I am a fakir and have no home nor household, sitting uninvolved in one place, leaving aside all mundane matters,
5. "yet, *Maya* is inevitable. She even harasses me often. I forget her but she does not forget me. She always comes and embraces me.
6. *"Adi Maya* originates from God and bewilders even Brahman and others. Then what could be said about a poor fakir like me!
7. "Only the mercy of God can save you from its clutches. Without continuously reciting God's name, this attachment will not be destroyed".
8. This is the way Baba described the powers of *Maya* to his devotees and extolled the recitation of God's name as the antidote of *Maya*.
9. 'Saints are my incarnations' as Krishna has said in the *Bhagvad*, when talking to Uddhava. Who does not know these clear words?
10. Therefore, for the sake of the welfare of his devotees, whatever the great Sai, Cloud of Mercy, said explaining the substance of this statement, listen to it with great humility.
11. "Such pious persons have become my followers whose sins have been destroyed and they have understood me.

12. "If you recite 'Sai, Sai," always, I will take you beyond the seven seas. If you believe in these words, you will be certainly benefitted.
13. "I do not need elaborate worship either sixteen fold[1] or eight fold [2]. Where there is infinite faith, I reside there".
14. So spoke Baba to his devotees, from time to time, with tender love. Let us derive solace from the recollection of these loving words.
15. Such is that kind Sai, friend and benefactor, who is the protector of those who are surrendered to him. Just listen to the miracle he performed espousing the cause of a devotee.
16. Drive away the waywardness of the mind, concentrate properly and listen to this new story. You will thereby be fulfilling your desires.
17. The shower of the nectar-like words from the mouth of Sai is in itself the fruits and gains of life. Who will then complain of the physical discomforts at Shirdi who is aware of the advantage to be gained for himself?
18. In the last chapter we had heard about the *darshan* given to an *agnihotri* of his own Guru, who had already expired, filling him with immense happiness.
19. This chapter relates an even more interesting story about a devotee suffering from tuberculosis whose health was restored by teaching him a lesson in his dreams.
20. Therefore, oh devotees listen attentively to this story of Sai's profound nature which burns all the sins.
21. This narrative is sacred and purifying like the holy water of the Ganges. Blessed are the ears of the listeners for they become the means to gain good now and hereafter.
22. Let us compare it with nectar. But nectar cannot be sweeter than this. Nectar will save the life but this story will give freedom from the cycle of birth and death.
23. People say they are powerful and they can do whatever they wish. One who thinks like this should listen to this story carefully.
24. If the human being is genuinely independent, then when he strives day and night to achieve happiness, why does he gain only unhappiness? This is the story of existence.
25. Even if a person is on guard to avoid unhappiness at every step, miseries follow quickly in search of him and keep track behind him.
26. If one tries to shake them off, they hold one by the neck; if one tries to brush them off they cling more. Vain is man's strife against it. It only debilitates him.

27. If a human being was really free, he would be completely happy and he would not have known even a trace of unhappiness.
28. Assuming he was a free being, he would never commit any sins and only accumulate his store of merits, thus enhancing his happiness.
29. But a human being is not independent. His previous births' deeds are attached to him, and the ways of *karma* are strange. He is forever a puppet in the hands of *karma*.
30. One tries to think of good deeds but one is dragged towards sins. Wanting to be meritorious, one ends up by being an evil doer.
31. Now listen to the story of Bhimaji Patil of Narayangaon village of Junnar Taluka, of Pune District. It is as sweet as nectar.
32. Bhimaji was a well-to-do-person. He was hospitable to everyone. He was never sad and was always of a cheerful disposition.
33. Destiny plays strange games. Without any rhyme or reason, we can either gain or lose. Sufferings born of *karma* come to you as a disease.
34. In 1909, Bhimaji was miserable. He started having cough and tuberculosis. He developed high temperature.
35. His cough became unbearable, the fever greatly increased and day by day became persistent. Bhimaji lost hopes.
36. He was always frothing at the mouth, had bad taste in the mouth and vomited blood. He had chronic stomach ache, felt nauseous and restless.
37. He became a bed-ridden patient. He lost vigour, his limbs weakened, he became thinner. All kinds of treatments were tried. He was extremely miserable.
38. He lost all taste for food and nourishment and could not digest even rice-gruel or a light diet. The condition was unbearable, whereby he did not know what to do.
39. All rites and rituals were performed; doctors and *vaidyas* gave up; he lost hope of survival and remained dejected.
40. Patil was depressed; he felt he would survive only for a few days; day by day he became more tired and started counting his days.
41. He worshipped his family deity but even she could not restore his health. Patil got fed up of consulting astrologers, exorcists and all and sundry.
42. Some referred to his condition as a sickness of the body, others the visitation of fate, which human endeavour could not control and which must, therefore, be borne.
43. Doctors were tried, *hakims* were tried, all remedies failed. No body could do anything. All efforts were futile.

44. Patil was extremely sad. He said: "Oh Lord, what have I done? Why is it that nothing avails? What kind of a sin is this?"
45. The ways of God are strange! He never reminds you of His existence even for a moment when you are happy. His ways are indeed unusual.
46. But, when it comes to His mind, He sends difficulties, one after the other, and makes a person remember Him and call out: "O, Narayan, come running to my help".
47. So be it. His intense and pitieous cries were heard. God was moved. Bhimaji was inspired to send a letter to Nana[3].
48. 'Nana will be able to do something which none else has been able to do'. Patil firmly believed this.
49. That was the auspicious beginning of the cure of his disease. Later he wrote a detailed letter and sent it to Nana.
50. Rememberance of Nana was itself inspired by Sainath. It paved the path of destruction of the disease. Saints' deeds are unpredictable.
51. Whatever is the cycle of time, there also is an underlying plan of God. Therefore, no one should think contrarily and brag about it.
52. Whatever good or bad takes place, it is only due to God, who holds the reins. He is the protector. He is the destroyer. He is the only active force – the doer.
53. Patil wrote to Chandorkar: 'I am fed up of taking medicines. I am tired of this life. I find the world wearisome.
54. 'Doctors have given up hope and declared the disease incurable. *Hakims* and *Vaidyas* are bewildered. I too, have lost all hope.
55. 'Yet, there is only one request, which I lay at your feet, that I meet you without fail. I have this strong desire'.
56. Chandorkar read the letter. He felt very sad at heart for Bhimaji Patil was a good soul. Nana was moved.
57. In reply, he suggested only one remedy. "Surrender at Sai's feet. This is the only saving grace. He is both Mother and Father.
58. "He is the compassionate mother of all, who comes running at your call, takes pity on you and picks you up in her arms, understanding the need of the children.
59. "Even leprosy is cured by mere *darshan*. What is to be said about tuberculosis! Have not the least doubt. Go and surrender at his feet.
60. "He grants whatever anyone asks. This is his creed. Therefore, I say, make haste. Take Sai's *darshan*.

61. "The greatest fear is the fear of death. What else can there be? Go and hold fast to Sai's feet. He alone will make you free of fear".
62. Patil's plight was unbearable. He had arrived at a perilous state of life. 'When will I meet Sainath? When will I accomplish the task?' (He thought).
63. Thus Patil became bewildered. He asked that preparations be made quickly for departure to Shirdi the very next day.
64. Thus with firm determination, Patil took leave of all and started for Shirdi for Maharaj's *darshan*.
65. Bhimaji took his relatives and set out hurriedly. He was most anxious to know when he would see Shirdi.
66. The cart arrived at the front gate of the courtyard of the *Masjid* and four persons held Bhimaji and carried him up the steps.
67. Nanasaheb was there. Madhavrao also came along. Everyone found Sai's feet more easily accessible through that Madhavrao.
68. Looking at Patil, Baba said, "Shyama, from where do you get hold of these scoundrels? And dump them on me? Does this become you?".
69. Bhimaji put his head at the feet of Sai and said: "Oh, Sainatha, have pity on this hapless creature. Protect me, oh caretaker of the weak".
70. Seeing Patil's plight, Sainatha took pity on him. Patil felt assured that his sufferings had come to an end.
71. Seeing Bhimaji so restless, Sai Samartha, the Ocean of Mercy, was greatly moved and said smilingly:
72. "Sit down and stop worrying. Wise people do not worry. No sooner you stepped into Shirdi, your destined miseries have got over.
73. "However deeply immersed in the ocean of trouble or buried deep in the valley of miseries, know that when he climbs the steps of the *Masjidmai* he will ride on a wave of happiness.
74. "The fakir here is very kind. He will destroy your troubles from the very roots and will look after you lovingly. He has tender feelings towards all.
75. "Therefore, you be at rest. Stay at Bhimabai's house. You will get relief within a couple of days".
76. Just like the case of a dying person receiving showers of nectar who immediately revives, such was Patil's satisfaction.
77. Hearing those words of Sainatha were like nectar to a man facing immediate death or water to a man dying of thirst.

78. When he sat in front of Baba for an hour, his vomitting of blood stopped, which otherwise he used to do at intervals of every five minutes.
79. He (Baba) did not examine the patient nor did he ask for the case history. Only with a merciful glance, the disease was destroyed from the root.
80. It is enough to receive a merciful glance. Even a dry stick can sprout leaves, flowers can blossom without spring, and the withered tree can become laden with fruit.
81. Ill health or good health. It's a question of whether the store of good deeds is exhausted or that of the sins. There is no escape but to experience the effects of destiny.
82. He had the disease only because of his fate. This is the rule applied to the cycle of birth and death. There is no other remedy or freedom from it, other than to undergo the sufferings.
83. But, if by good fortune one can get the *darshan* of a Saint, this is one certain means to cure the illness – and to heal it without suffering.
84. A disease itself shows that this was destiny. But if a Saint casts a merciful glance it takes away the misery out of the destined suffering.
85. The actual remedy lay in Baba's words. On one occasion, he cured malaria by feeding yoghurt and rice to a black dog.
86. You may think these stories are deviations. But listening to them altogether, you will realise the significance. In any case, it is Sai who has reminded me of it.
87. "I will tell my own story", Sai himself has said this. He only has reminded me of these stories, at this time.
88. There was a person by the name of Bala Ganpat, who was a tailor by caste and was a great devotee. He came to the *Masjid* and sat in front of Baba and prayed imploringly.
89. "What sin have I committed? Why doesn't this malaria leave me? Baba, I have tried a number of remedies. But it does not leave my body.
90. So now what shall I do? I have tried all medicines and decoctions. Now at least, you tell me some remedy so that this fever will leave me".
91. Then, Baba felt pity for him. He replied and gave a remedy for that malaria. Now, listen to that marvellous story.
92. "Feed a few morsels of curds and rice to a black dog near the temple of Mother Laxmi. You will be cured immediately".

93. Bala was a little anxious. He went home and searched. He found some left over rice and also little curds near by.

94. Bala thought to himself: 'Though I have procured curds and rice, will that black dog be there, near the temple, at the right time?'

95. But this worry of Bala was unnecessary. When he reached the appointed place, he saw a black dog approaching him, with a wagging tail.

96. Seeing everything working out right, Bala was very pleased. He fed the dog curds and rice, and informed all this to Baba.

97. In short, the whole incident may be called anything by anybody, but since then the malaria left him and Bala recovered.

98. Similar was the case of Bapusaheb Butti. He had a chill in the stomach and had continuous loose motions and vomitting also.

99. The medicine chest was full of medicines but none was effective. Bapusaheb got alarmed and worried.

100. Due to persistent loose motions and vomitting, Bapusaheb became weak and had no energy left for his regular *darshan* of Baba.

101. Baba came to hear about it. He sent for him and made him sit before him. He said "Beware! From now onwards, you will not go to the toilet.

102. "And also, vomitting must stop", shaking his forefinger before his face. Observing him again, he repeated the words.

103. The essence of it is that his words had such weightage that both ailments got scared and immediately retreated. Butti felt better.

104. Once there was a cholera epidemic in the village. At that time Butti suffered from it. He had vomitting and motions simultaneously. He was in distress and had intense thirst.

105. Dr. Pillay was near him. He tried whatever was possible. When finally nothing succeeded, they approached Baba.

Dr. Pillay

106. Every detail of how the disease had progressed, was related to Baba, as a supplication. Pillay asked Baba whether coffee or water would be better to give.

107. Then Baba replied to him: "Drink an infusion of milk, boiled with almonds, walnuts, and pistachios.

108. "This will quench his thirst and the disease will be cured immediately". In short, when he was given this infusion to drink his troubles disappeared.

109. "Eat walnuts, pistachios and almonds"! Would they ever give relief in the case of cholera?! It is enough to repose faith in Baba's words. There is no scope for doubts.
110. Once a *Swami* from Alandi came to Shirdi village for the *darshan* of Sai *Samartha*, and arrived at Baba's dwelling.
111. He suffered from an ear disease. Therefore, he was unwell and had insomnia. Though he had got himself operated, it was of no use at all.
112. He experienced shooting pains beyond endurance. He could do nothing to control it. He thought of leaving and went to ask for blessings.
113. He bowed down at Sai's feet and received *udi* as *prasad*. The Swami asked for blessings and said: "Always have mercy on me".
114. Madhavrao Despande entreated Baba about his ear. Maharaj assured him saying. "Allah will make it well".
115. With these blessings, the *Swami* returned to Pune. Eight days later his letter came saying that the pain had immediately subsided.
116. Only the swelling was still there. Therefore, an operation was advised. So he came to Bombay for a second operation.
117. He went to the same doctor. Unknown, Baba was obliged to help. When the doctor examined the ear, he saw no swelling anywhere.
118. The doctor said that there was no need now for an operation. The *Swami's* dreaded worries were over. Everyone was surprised.
119. I have just remembered one more story of this nature, which I will now tell the listeners and then end the chapter.
120. Eight days before the laying of the flooring in the courtyard (of the *Masjid*) began, Mahajani suffered from acute indigestion.
121. He began to have many loose motions. Leaving all this burden on Baba, he did not take any medicines or treat himself. He became quite harassed.
122. Mahajani knew that Sai was omniscient. Therefore, he did not describe his difficulties to him.
123. 'When he wills it, he will grant me relief, on his own'. Having this implicit faith, he bore the disease.
124. 'Whatever is destined to be suffered, will be! But there should be no break in the *puja* rituals'. This was the intense wish of Kaka each day.
125. Later on, when the motions became too frequent and were out of

control, let us see what he did in order not to have a break in the *arati* and service.

126. He kept a copper vessel filled with water, on which he could lay his hands even in darkness, in a corner of the *Masjid*.

127. He, himself, would sit near Baba, pressing his legs and always remained present at the time of the *arati*, this being his regular routine.

128. Whenever he got a spasm in the stomach, since the water pot would be at hand, he would go to some nearby secluded spot and return after relieving himself.

129. So be it. When they asked Baba's permission to lay the flooring, he gave it to Tatya. Listen to what he said then to him.

130. "I am going to the Lendi. When I return from the Lendi, you may start the work of the flooring at that time".

131. Later Baba returned and sat on his seat. Kaka came in time and started massaging his legs.

132. Devotees from Bombay came by *tongas*, via Kopergaon, by train which came to a halt there. They came up the steps with all the preparations for this *puja* and bowed down to Baba.

133. Along with everyone else, Patil from Andheri also came with flowers, rice and *puja* items; and sat in anticipation.

134. Just then, in the lower part of the courtyard, in the place where the *rath* used to be kept, exactly at the same spot the first stroke of the pick-axe was struck and the work of the laying of the courtyard floor began.

135. No sooner did he hear that noise that Baba shouted strangely. In an instant he became transformed into Narasimha[4]. His eyes blazed with fury.

136. "Who is that striking with the pick-axe? I will break his back." Saying this, he got up taking his *satka*. All present were filled with terror.

137. The labourer threw aside the pick-axe and fled. Everybody ran helter – skelter. Kaka too was frightened. At that moment, Baba held him by his hand.

138. And said: "Where are you going? Sit down." Just then Tatya and Laxmi arrived. He started hurling a torrent of abuses at them, to his heart's content.

139. The people who were outside the courtyard were also abused. Just then, he picked up a bag of roasted peanuts which had been dropped there.

140. It must have belonged to somebody and fallen in the *Masjid*, while running away helter – skelter, when Baba had been in a fit of anger.

141. The nuts must have been about one full *seer*[5]. He brought out one handful at a time, rubbed them between his palms, blew upon them and cleaned them.

142. Then he fed the cleaned nuts to Mahajani. While he continued to shower abuses on one hand, on the other hand he continued to clean the peanuts.

Laxman Ganesh
alias Kaka Mahajani

143. "Eat them, eat them", he said. He put cleaned nuts in his palm. He too ate a few, himself. In this manner, the bag was emptied.

144. When the nuts were finished, he said: "Bring some water. I am thirsty". Kaka filled a vessel and brought it. He drank some and told him also to drink it.

145. While Kaka was drinking, he said: "Go, your suffering has ended". He added: "Where are those wretched *Brahmins* ? Go and fetch them".

146. So be it. The group re-assembled. The *Masjid* was crowded as before. The flooring work was resumed. Kaka's diarrohea was stopped.

147. What kind of a remedy is this for loose stools?! It is the words of the Saints[6] that act as medicine. He who regards them as *prasad* can have need for nothing else.

148. A householder from Harda was suffering from shooting pains in the stomach. He was harassed by it for fourteen years. He had tried all kinds of remedies.

149. His name was Dattopant. By word of mouth, he had heard about the powers of Sai, the great Saint of Shirdi, whose mere *darshan* solved all difficulties.

150. Having heard such fame, he went to Shirdi, laid his head at Sai's feet and begged him to be merciful to him.

151. "Baba, fourteen years have passed. The shooting pains in the stomach have pursued me. Enough of it now. It is beyond endurance. I have no strength left to bear it.

152. "I have never committed a breach of faith. I have shown no disrespect to my parents. I do not know the deeds of my past birth, due to which I am undergoing this suffering".

153. Only a kind glance from a Saint, a Saint's *prasad* or blessing, can remove the disease. There is nothing else as effective.

154. Such was Dattopant's experience. As soon as Baba's hand was placed on his head and he received the *vibhuti* and blessings, he felt relief.

155. The Maharaj made him stay for some days. Slowly, the shooting pains[7] in the stomach disappeared altogether.

156. Such was the great Saint! How shall I describe his powers? His very nature was to oblige others and he had love for all beings.

157. If we go on praising in words, his Life, I find one deed is better than the other. Now let me return to pick up the thread of my original narrative about the life of Bhimaji.

158. So be it. Baba asked for *udi*; gave a little to Bhimaji; rubbed some on his forehead and kept his hand on his head.

159. He was ordered to go to the lodging. Patil started walking and went up to the cart on foot. He felt vigorous.

160. From there, he went to the place previously decided. Though the place was small, as it was suggested by Baba, it was important for him.

161. The floor had just been thumped smooth, with the help of a wooden log, for the purpose of levelling. Therefore, it was wet. Even then he obeyed Baba's orders and stayed there itself.

162. He would have got a dry place in the village, since Bhimaji had many contacts. But since Baba had particularly indicated the place, he did not think of going anywhere else.

163. He spread out two gunny bags upon the floor, on top of which he spread out his bedding. Patil went to sleep peacefully.

164. That same night, this is what happened. Bhimaji got a dream. He saw his teacher, whom he knew in his childhood, and the teacher began to beat him.

165. He had a cane in his hand with which he practically flayed the skin off his back, to make him learn by heart a poem. The student was very miserable.

166. What was that poem? Listeners might be curious to know. Therefore I will quote the complete poem, word by word, as I have heard:-

'She is known as a real or an ideal wife, who thinks she has stepped on the head of a serpent if she ever enters a stranger's house. Her words are so rare that they are like wealth procured from a miser. She feels profoundly happy when she gives pleasure to her husband,

even though there may not be money in the house. She behaves according to her husband's wishes, without hesitation.'

167. But he could not understand the reason for this punishment. The teacher would not put aside the cane, as he was inflamed with rage and terribly determined.

168. Immediately afterwards, he had a second dream which was stranger than the first. He saw that an unknown person came and forcibly sat on his chest.

169. He used his chest as a grinding stone and took another stone, as a roller, in his hand; and as it were, started grinding. Bhimaji felt choked, as if he was heading towards heaven.

170. Finally the dream ended. He slept with some measure of comfort. The sun rose and Patil woke up.

171. He felt rejuvenated as he had never felt before. He completely forgot about the disease. How could anyone remember to look for the sign of the caning or being used as a grinding stone!

172. People say that dreams are unreal. But sometimes one gets contrary experiences. Patil was completely cured of his disease on the same day and his sufferings were over.

173. Patil was very happy. He felt as if he had a new lease of life. Then he started walking slowly for Baba's *darshan*.

174. Seeing Baba's moon-like face, the ocean of happiness welled up in Patil. He was in raptures and swooned in ecstasy.

175. With tears of joy raining down his face, he laid his forehead upon Baba's feet. How blissful was the aftermath of the beating and grinding he had suffered!

176. "How can an insignificant creature like me ever repay your obligation? I know it to be impossible, so I only put my head on your feet.

177. "This is the only way I can repay. There is no other means. Inconceivable and irrefutable is this miracle of yours, O Baba Sai!"

178. Patil stayed, singing such praises, for a month. He also gratefully remembered Nana's obligation. He returned, being completely gratified.

179. Thus he remained contented, with devotion and faith. In his gratefulness to Sai, he came to Shirdi often.

180. One needs no more than two hands and a head to show gratefulness to Sainath, if it is done with a steady mind and faith in him alone to the exclusion of all others.

181. Whoever is in difficulties, performs *Satyanarayan puja* if a certain calamity is averted or some boon is received.
182. Since then Patil started doing the *Satya Sai Vrat*, every Thursday, after an early bath and being abstemious.
183. As people read the *Satya Narayan Katha*, Patil recited the chapters of Dasganu's 'Arvachin Bhakta Leelamrut' relating to Sai's life, with love.
184. In this book of forty five chapters, Ganudas describes the lives of many *bhaktas*. Out of these, three relate to Sainath. Those formed the *Satya Sai Katha*.
185. Out of all the *vratas* this was the best. Patil read these three chapters and experienced boundless joy and was happy.
186. Patil gathered together relatives, brothers, friends and neighbours and regularly did *Satya Sai Vrat*, very happily.
187. The *naivedya* was of the same kind being one and a quarter measures. The rest of the rituals were the same. In one case it was Narayan and in the other it was Sai. Not a single detail was overlooked.
188. Patil started the convention. It became a custom in the village and people started observing Satya Sai Vrat, one after the other.
189. Such are these saints, the merciful ones! When the proper time comes, they remove the worldly cares of the dovotees by their mere *darshan* and even change their destiny.
190. The next narration, herein, will be about a person craving for progeny; and the marvellousness of the oneness amongst Saints.
191. A resident of Nanded town, who was an affluent Parsi will have a son after receiving Baba's blessings.
192. Baba indicated that Mouli Saheb was the Saint from that place. The Parsi returned to his own place, full of joy.
193. It is a very lovable story. Listeners should hear it quietly. Then they will come to realise Sai's all-pervasiveness and also his affectionate nature.
194. Pant Hemad surrenders to Sai and bows down to the Saints and listeners. In the next chapter I will tell you about that which I have already mentioned. Listen with respect.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the thirteenth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Cure of Bhimaji's Tuberculosis".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Invocation, Offering of seat, Worship of feet, Oblations of water, Sipping water for purification, Bath, Clothing, Sacrificial thread, *Sandalwood* paste, Flowers, Incense, *Naivedya*, Lamp, *Dakshina*, *Pradakshina*, *Mantra* with flowers.
2. *Sandal-wood* paste, Flowers, Incense, Lamp, *Naivedya*, Camphor, Rice mixed with turmeric, Coconut.
3. Narayan Govind Chandorkar alias Nanasaheb.
4. Avatar that Vishnu took, as a man lion, to destroy Hiranyakshyapu.
5. Approximately 2 kilos.
6. Once, Shirdi's Madhavrao Deshpande had a problem with piles. He told Maharaj about it. "We will have some medicine in the afternoon." Maharaj said. Accordingly, Maharaj made a concoction of senna pods and gave some of it to Madhavrao. He was completely cured by it. Two years later he had the same problem. As Maharaj had earlier given him the concoction, Madhavrao, on his own prepared it at home and took it. He did not feel better with it; and his problem was aggravated. Later, thanks to Maharaj's grace, he became alright. In short, the cure is only due to Maharaj's blessings and grace.
7. Kaka Mahajani's elder brother Gangadharpant suffered from shooting pains in the stomach for a number of years. Every year, he suffered greatly, from this ailment. Having heard about Maharaj's fame, he went there and complained about it to Maharaj. Maharaj touched his stomach and asked, "Does it hurt here?" Gangadharpant replied in the affirmative. Maharaj said: "Allah will cure." Since then the shooting pains in the stomach of Gangadharpant left him and did not recur.

   Once, Nanasaheb Chandorkar had the problem of shooting pains in the stomach. It was so severe, that night and day he was agonised by it. The doctor gave him an enema, but he had no relief. In the end he went to Maharaj, and Maharaj told him to take *barfi* (a sweetmeat) pounded with clarified butter. And with this prescription, his shooting pains in the stomach completely stopped.

He is the compassionate mother of all, who comes running at your call, takes pity on you and picks you up in her arms, understanding the need of the children. (Ch.13, ovi 58)

Bala Shimpi

14

Ruttonji's Meeting with Sai

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Hail Sainatha, the greatest among all Saints! Hail, hail compassionate one, laden with virtues! Hail, the unchangeable and Supreme One! Hail, hail the boundless and Immanent One!
2. In your infinite mercy towards your devotees, upon whom you keep a watch, without their knowledge, you meet them under different pretexts, and save them from their difficulties.
3. You are the incarnation to uplift the devotees and to kill the demons, who are active in the night, in the form of passions, which are difficult to overcome.
4. Those who came for *darshan* in good faith were able to drink the nectar of self – contentment and were happy with inner bliss, swaying with love and happiness.
5. Such was Sai Samartha, the embodiment of virtues! I am an ordinary, poor and humble person. I prostrate at his feet with humility.
6. In the last chapter, the story was told about how malaria was cured by making the patient feed a black dog with curds and rice.
7. Terrible diseases like cholera and diarrohea were cured merely by the waving of an admonishing finger, or by having rice gruel, or roasted peanuts.
8. Similarly, how the shooting pains in the stomach of one person, the ear ache of another and the severe tuberculosis of a third person were cured by means of a mere *darshan*.
9. How Bhimaji was completely happy by the grace of Sree Sai; and how he was indebted to Sai and totally surrendered to him.
10. In the same manner, this episode is also unique, amazing and mysterious. Knowing the eagerness of the listeners, I will present it.

11. If the listeners are not attentive, how will the speaker be inspired? How will the narration reach the climax and how will it be interesting?
12. What can a speaker do? He is completely dependent upon the listeners. The listeners make the story entertaining by being absorbed in it.
13. This being the life story of a Saint, it is naturally pleasing, in all respects. The eating habits of Saints, their everyday behaviour and even their casual remarks are enchanting.
14. This is not a life-sketch or biography. Sai Maharaj, the Cloud of Mercy, showered this because of his love for his devotees, as a means of remembering him and obtaining bliss.
15. Such are the stories of these great Saints, who talk about the worldly life but place one on the path of salvation. The stories deal with material and spiritual life, at the same time.
16. This must have been their underlying purpose that one should lead a happy life; but should always be careful and thus this body should be fruitfully utilised.
17. When innumerable merits are accumulated, a soul unexpectedly gets the life of a human being. Over and above, if a person is able to lead a spiritual life, he is most fortunate.
18. Even in such a life if he does not achieve fulfilment, his being born is useless and only an added weight on the earth. Can he be happier than a mere animal?
19. A human being, who does not know anything more than eating, sleeping, fear and sex, is no better than an animal shorn of tail and horns.
20. How great is this human life! It is the only way to achieve devotion to God and the four-fold[1] liberation. This is the only means of self-realisation.
21. Our existence in this world is of a duration no longer than a flash of lightening. How can people find moments of complete happiness when they are caught between the jaws of destiny?
22. Mother, father, sister, husband, wife, son, daughter, cousin – they are like logs of wood which float in the current of a river.
23. They seem to be together for a moment. Then they scatter by the movements of the waves and go separately never to meet again.
24. He, who has not achieved self enhancement, has troubled his mother in vain. Without ever surrendering at the feet of saints, birth will be futile.

25. As soon as a being is born, he heads towards death. Therefore, if he believes that death will come at some later date then he is deceived.

26. One should always remember that death awaits you. This body is the fodder on which death thrives. Such are the ways of the world. Be on guard.

27. In the daily course of life behave with caution and you will achieve the highest objective in life without effort. Therefore, do not be lethargic in the world and do not be disinterested in making efforts.

28. Those who do listen to the stories of Sai with love, they will be effortlessly benefitted. Their devotion at Sai's feet will increase and they will obtain happiness and prosperity.

29. This collection of stories will remind those who are full of affection for Sai, of his lotus feet, at every step.

30. It describes that which is impossible to put into words; and that which is beyond the senses, it makes possible to enjoy. However much you may drink this nectar in the form of these stories, it is difficult to be fully satisfied.

31. The deeds of Saints are impossible to comprehend. Their glories are beyond description. Who is capable of fully putting them in words?

32. If these stories are regularly heard, Sai's image will perpetually remain before our eyes, our minds and our hearts; and we will remember him and meditate upon him day and night.

33. One would perceive him while waking or dreaming; while sitting, resting or eating. Wherever one goes about, either in society or in the jungle, he would seem to be walking beside him.

34. If thus he is with us day and night, one would be absorbed in divine contemplation; and when this happens every day, the mind will be one with the supreme energy.

35. Now, I will pick up the threads of my narration from the previous chapter. We will continue the narration. Please listen with respect.

36. One may eat the '*shira-puri* [2]' of faith and devotion, as much as one can but one will never be satisfied even if one eats till one is gorged.

37. So be it. Now, another story. Listeners, pay attention to it with respect. The efficacy of the *darshan* of a Saint will become firm in your mind.

38. Baba did not do anything outwardly. He did not go anywhere leaving his place. But he knew everything sitting at one place and would let it be known to everybody.

39. That eternal truth which dwells in the body pervades the whole universe. Sacrificing the body, experience the unity.

40. One who surrenders to that eternal truth becomes one with all. Know that. If one follows diversity, then one perpetuates the cycle of birth and death.

41. The intellect which regards everything as separate is actually due to ignorance. It needs to be purified by *trishudhi* [3]. However, the advent of the Guru purifies the mind and makes us realise our real self.

42. When one refrains from ignorance, that itself is the realisation of oneness. Even if there is the least sense of differentiation, how can there exist that oneness?

43. From *Brahman* to the immovable object, with any name, all are considered as non-*Brahman* due to false knowledge. Whereas in reality they are all full of *Brahman*.

44. One who by nature has profound knowledge of everything and is disinterested in the duties of the mundane existence, and from whom name and form have been obliterated, he is *Brahman* without limbs.

45. Due to misguided knowledge and illusion and the belief that *Brahman* is different, these fallacies take place and the mind is lured to the various clinging forms of nature. But when it has the right knowledge, it becomes steady and becomes one with pure consciousness.

46. I am different and the people are different from me. He who does not think in this differentiating manner, for him everything is full of that pure consciousness and then nothing else remains.

47. One who considers it irksome to do the duties of the mundane existence and has eliminated the feeling of multiplicity altogether, this is reaching *Brahmahood*.

48. "I see myself everywhere. There is no place without me. I fill all space in all the directions. There is nothing else but me".

49. Hold fast to this conviction — and push away the misguidance of *Maya*. Veil your sight and realise that there is nothing save myself.

50. The listeners could raise a common doubt: "How then lies the difference in the self being the knower and *Brahman* the known?" What is the remedy for this?

51. Sense of differentiation has been proved to be caused by passion. Immediately it causes multiplicity; and that is the reason for birth and death.

52. As soon as the dark vision of ignorance disappears, the whole universe also disappears. Everywhere the Reality of Self fills the vision and multiplicity takes flight immediately.

53. Pure water poured into pure water remains pure water and is indistinguishable – one from the other. The sense of differentiation does not remain.

54. Pieces of wood of different shapes, when put into the fire, they look the same. They lose their form and are indistinct, merging themselves in the fire.

55. Similarly, the knowledge that the Self is one needs no other proof. The Self abides in all beings fully, but it is without form.

56. The false illusion to the contrary is the cause of a confused mind, which leads to the painful experience of birth and death, leaving the being in an unsettled state of mind.

57. The *Siddha* abides within the perpetual bliss of self realisation, eluding the clutches of *Maya* and avoiding the vexations of name and form, concentrating on the Pure and Real Self.

58. Sree Sainath is the true example of this state. Blessed are those who were fortunate enough to get his *darshan*.

59. The moon reflected in the water appears to be surrounded by water but it is actually beyond the waters. Likewise, the Saints though surrounded by numerous devotees, are in reality separate from them.

60. Although surrounded by the devotees, there is no attachment to anyone. They abide always in the Self and do not at all care for the worldly ties.

61. Such are the great Saints and sages, that even God does their bidding. There is nothing which is unattainable for them in this world and nothing which is beyond their knowledge.

62. There are innumerable Gurus and disciples in this world, who give and receive, respectively, the teachings. But rare are the Gurus who give actual experience with their teachings.

63. Enough of this initial narration. Let us start with the main story for which the listeners are very anxious. Let them be benefitted by listening.

64. In the city of Nanded, in the Nizam's dominion, there was a famous Parsi merchant. He was popular and very pious. His name was Ruttonji[4].

65. He had every material possession. He owned horses, carriages, farms

and woodlands. The doors of his house were open to all and nobody was turned away empty-handed.

66. In this way he seemed to be enjoying happiness, day and night. But, deep inside, he was caught permanently by a crocodile in the form of worry.

67. This is the law of nature that nobody can have undiluted happiness. Some way or the other, everyone has some anxiety.

68. A person may say boastingly that he is superior and the richest. He may walk upright with uncalled for pride.

69. Whenever there is anything without a blemish, it will be flawed at least by a small blot. Therefore, it seems that God does this with His own hands.

70. Ruttonji was endowed with wealth. He was hospitable to all; helped the weak and removed their miseries. He was always pleasant.

71. In this way, though the world thought that *Shethji* was happy, the pleasure of wealth was of no consequence for a person who had no son.

72. There was no dearth of daughters. There were twelve, one after the other. But how could he have the slightest of happiness? How could his mind be at rest?

73. Is there any beauty in a *kirtan* performed without love? What is music without harmony and rhythm? And what kind of a brahmin is he, who does not wear the sacred thread?

74. What profit is there in proficiency of all arts when there is no sense of discrimination? What is correct behaviour if it is divorced from mercy towards all beings?

75. How is there sanctity in one who wears *sandal* paste on his forehead, and *tulsi* rosary around his neck, if he mocks at Saints?

76. What use is pilgrimage without piety and repentance? What good is ornamentation without a necklace?[5] What is a home without a son?

77. He was constantly worrying about whether God would grant him a virtuous son. This was a nagging anxiety.

78. Because of this *Shethji* was always depressed. He could not relish food or drink. He was always grief stricken and was worrying constantly.

79. "O God, wash off this blemish and make me flawless. Give an heir to the family. Save me from humiliation, *Prabhuraya*".

80. As he had immense faith in Das Ganu, he opened his heart to him, who in turn told him to go to Shirdi and his wish would be fulfilled.

81. "Go and take Baba's *darshan*. Bow down at his feet and tell him your heart's secret at length. He will bless you.
82. Go. Your well-being will be assured. Baba's deeds are inconceivable. Surender to him completely. You will be benefitted".
83. Accepting this advice, Ruttonji took a decision. After some days, he arrived in Shirdi.
84. He went to the *Masjid* for *darshan* and prostrated at the feet of Sai. Seeing Maharaj, the store of religious merit, he was overwhelmed with a surge of love for him.
85. He opened the basket, took out the garland of flowers and lovingly put it round Baba's neck. The fruits he had brought as an offering were placed at Baba's feet.
86. Ruttonji, with great humility and highest respect, went and sat near Baba. Listen to his entreaty.
87. "I have heard that whenever people have insurmountable problems, they come to you for help and you immediately protect them.
88. "Therefore, I have come here to meet you, with great hopes and seek a boon at your feet. Please do not turn me away, Maharaja".
89. Then Baba said to him: "You have taken a long time to come here. Give me whatever *dakshina* you wish. Then your objective will be fulfilled".
90. Whoever came for *darshan* and bowed at his feet, whether a Hindu, Muslim or Parsi, he would ask *dakshina* from him.
91. Even that was not a small sum. It could be a rupee or two, or fifty or hundred, or thousand or lakh or more depending on how much he could afford.
92. Even if it was given he would ask for more. If he was told there was nothing left, he would say take a loan; and when it was impossible to get a loan, he would then stop asking.
93. And he would say to the devotees: "Do not worry at all. I will give you plenty of money. Sit near me without any care.
94. "In this world, everybody has somebody or the other; but nobody belongs to me. Allah and only Allah is mine.
95. "If someone loves me more than life, I need such a person. If such a person gives me something, I give to him a hundred fold".
96. Even if there was a millionaire, Maharaj would order him to go to a poor man's home to ask for *dakshina* for him (Baba).
97. Sai did not distinguish between the very rich and the poor; the humble, the miserable, the indigent. One was as good as the other.

98. The person would obey his orders, bow his head and would go to the homes of the poor and beg on behalf of Baba, giving up pride.
99. The essence of all this was that, under the pretext of *dakshina*, Baba would teach humility to his devotees.
100. One may doubt why a *sadhu* needs money. But, in this respect, if you think properly, your doubts will be cleared.
101. If Sai has fulfilled all his wishes, why does he require *dakshina*? How can he be called desireless, when he asks for money from his devotees?
102. Why does he stretch out his hands when a hailstone or a diamond or a copper coin or a gold mohur are alike to him?
103. When he begs for food only for the appeasement of his hunger and has taken the vow of non-attachment, when he appears to be without expectation and totally disinterested, why then this desire for *dakshina*?
104. Why should a person stoop to begging for money at whose doorstep the eight *siddhis* [6] stand to serve him with folded hands and the nine treasures[7] are at whose command.
105. How can money matter to one who spurns the material objects and cares not even for heaven, but is lost wholly within the Self?
106. Those who are Saints, pious and holy, who are well-versed in scriptures, and whose life is dedicated to the welfare of the devotees, why should they need money?
107. Why does a *sadhu* need *dakshina*? He should be desireless. In spite of his being a *fakir*, he cannot escape greed and is always worshipping money!
108. At the first *darshan* he accepts *daskshina*. At the next *darshan* he asks for *dakshina*. While taking leave also he asks for *dakshina*. What is the meaning of asking every time?
109. Traditionally, in the beginning, drinking water is offered; then washing of hands and mouth is done; afterwards *pan* (betel leave) and betel nut are offered, followed by *dakshina*.
110. But Baba's system was strange. While the *sandalwood* paste was being annointed or the rice mixed with turmeric and other decorations were offered, he expected *dakshina* to be offered at that time.
111. As soon as the preliminaries of the ritual started, Baba would ask for *dakshina*. Therefore, at that moment, one had to give it up as if it was an offering to Brahman.
112. Now to clear this doubt, a lot of efforts are not needed. If you pay attention for a while, you will be satisfied.

113. Wealth should be accumulated for a good cause. But it is spent on trivial things and worldly passions.
114. Because of wealth good deeds can be performed. Because of good deeds real knowledge is gained, selfishness is transformed into acquiring spiritual knowledge. This results in contentment.
115. In the beginning, for a long time, Baba did not take anything. He would collect burnt matchsticks and filled his pockets with them.
116. He would ask for nothing whether it be from a follower or a non – devotee. If a paisa[8] or two were placed before him, he would purchase tobacco or oil from it.
117. He greatly loved tobacco. He smoked *beedis* or *chillum*. That *chillum* served him sincerely. It was rarely unlit.
118. Later on, somebody thought that how could he go empty handed for the *darshan* of a Saint. Therefore, he started accepting *dakshina*.
119. If anyone offered him one paisa he would put it in his pocket; but if he was offered two paise he would return it, as it is. This went on for a long time.
120. But after some time, Sai Baba's fame increased. Hordes of devotees started coming. Systematic worship started taking place.
121. Worshippers were aware of the conventions of *puja* and that without offering *dakshina* in the form of gold or flowers, a *puja* would not be complete.
122. *Dakshina* for Guru *Puja* is as necessary as a gift at the time of a king's coronation or at the time of *pada-puja* (*puja* of the feet).
123. It is said in the *Vedas* that those who offer *dakshina* attain the highest position (i.e. heaven). Those who offer gold coins attain salvation and wisdom and purity of mind.
124. It is also said that offering sandalwood paste brings sanctity, offering rice coloured with kumkum and turmeric brings long life; offering flowers and betelnut brings wealth and prosperity and great riches by *dakshina*.
125. The golden flower of *dakshina* is as important in *puja* as sandalwood, coloured rice, flowers and betelnut, for it bestows on the giver vast riches.
126. *Dakshina* is necessary at the time of *puja* of a deity as well as the worship of a *Siddha*. It is the custom of those who perform a *vrat* [9], at the time of its completion, to offer gold as a gift to the Brahmins.
127. The frantic activity of this world depends totally on money. It is also the means for covering up loss of reputation. Money is essential for that.

128. When uttering the *Vedic Mantras* '*Hiranyagarbha – Gharbhasta*' etc. at the time of worship of a deity, *dakshina* is sanctified, then why should it not be given when worshipping a Saint?

129. When going for the *darshan* of a Saint, each one behaves as per his own light. Every person has a different view point and it is difficult for all to agree upon one and the same thing.

130. Some go with a view to sing praises and pay their respects; some go to test a Saint; some think that a Saint is he who can read your mind and tell you.

131. Some pray for longevity; some want elephants, gold, wealth, property; some wish for sons and grandsons; some want perpetual power.

132. Baba's method of dealing with people was unique. If any came with the intention of ridiculing him those persons' wickedness would be destroyed and they would become humble and bow down at his lotus feet.

133. If they were not fortunate enough for that, then at least they would repent, lose all pride undoubtedly and would certainly get proof of Baba's powers.

134. All these were ordinary, simple devotees completely attached to the world. Their minds should be purified by making them offer *dakshina*, was what Baba willed.

135. The *Shrutis* prescribe 'sacrifice, charity and dedicated effort' as the means. One desirous of self-realisation should offer *dakshina*, because it is one of the easiest means of acquiring it. This is clearly said in the *Vedas*.

136. A devotee whether selfish or desirous of spiritual life – both kinds, if they desire that their objectives are fulfilled, should give *dakshina* to their respective Gurus for their own good.

137. Even *Prajapati*[10] preached the same principle to his three progeny viz. gods, demons and the human beings, at the time of the completion of *Brahmacharya*, when they asked for *upadesh*[11].

138. He uttered the single letter '*da*' as *upadesh*. What was the meaning of it? He asked them and confirmed their interpretation. It was a strange *leela* between Guru and disciple!

139. The Gods understood it as '*danta*' - to have restraint; the demons understood it as '*daya*' - to be kind; the humans understood it as '*dana*' - to be charitable. *Prajapati* said: "Well done, well done".

140. Gods are not a people apart. They are human beings only but with a different nature. They imbibe their best virtues within themselves and exercise restraint. Their character earns them their title.

141. Among humans only there are demons. They resort to violence, they are wicked and harsh, and are extremely avaricious. Such are the three kinds of human beings[12].

142. Greed is man's major vice. Even then, to save man from the deep, dark, pit of greed, Sainath, the Ocean of Kindness, stretches his arm and pulls them out.

143. In the *Taitariya Upanishad* (Adapted) and the *Ekadashi Shruti* many kinds of charities are mentiond. Listen to each one of them.

144. Give with reverence and faith. Giving without faith is futile. One should respect the commands of a king and the dictums of the scriptures and should give something out of a sense of decency.

145. At weddings and other social occasions, you must give gifts to keep up goodwill because it is a custom of society. Such are the preachings.

146. Baba also, as per this letter '*da*' asked the same thing, from his devotees for their own good. "Be kind , be charitable, be restrained. You will get great happiness".

147. There are three vices of which, to be without restraint, is one. To remove the effect of these, the only simple remedy is the one letter advice, which the teachers have been teaching to the students.

148. Passion, anger and greed are most inauspicious for progressing on the path of spirituality. It is very difficult to conquer them for which this is a very simple remedy.

149. Just as the *Shrutis*, so also are the *Smritis*. Such is their confirmation. I am giving here the quotation for the benefit of the listeners, so that they have better and firm understanding.

150. "Passion, anger and greed are the three doors to hell; and are the cause for the destruction of the self. Therefore, they should be definitely discarded[13]".

151. The very kind and great Sai asked for *dakshina* from his devotees for their own well-being and thus taught them to sacrifice.

152. What is the value of *dakshina* ? What is spirituality if one is not ready to lay down one's life to carry out a command of his Guru?

153. Really, what reason did Baba have for asking for *dakshina* other than for the good of his devotees? His own life did not depend on *dakshina*.

154. He begged alms for food . There was no selfish motive behind his asking for dakshina. His only objective was that his devotees' minds should be purified.

155. According to the above mentioned quotation from the *Vedas*, *dakshina* was essential; and until that is given a *puja* is never complete.

156. Now let us bring an end to this section about *dakshina*. Its meaning is very clearly explained. There is no ulterior motive or greed in accepting *dakshina*, which was taken only for the benefit of the devotees.

157. Therefore, we will narrate further in details the unfinished story. Listen to Ruttonji's episode of *dakshina* and Sai's marvellous handling of it.

158. Listeners, listen with full devotion to this amazing story and see how Sai is unique and free from greed.

159. At the time of asking for *dakshina* from the *Shethji*, Sai mentioned an instance of the past, which *Shethji* could not recall and he was bewildered.

160. "You gave me Rupees three and fourteen annas earlier. That I know. Out of the amount intended for me, give me only the balance. Give that to me as *dakshina*."

161. This was the first *darshan* of Baba. Hearing these words of Baba, Ruttonji Sheth was amazed and tried to recollect.

162. 'I have not come to Shirdi before. Nor have I sent anything with anybody'. In these circumstances, notice his surprise at Sai Maharaj's words!

163. Such a thing had not happened. Ruttonji was embarrassed. He gave the *dakshina* and bowed down but could not resolve the enigma.

164. It was left at that. He told the reason for coming. Again he prostrated at his feet and sat with folded hands.

165. *Shethji* was very satisfied and said: "Baba, it is good that my last birth's good deeds have borne fruit and that I am able to have the *darshan* of your feet.

166. "I am ill-fated, ignorant, and know not how to perform *puja*, rituals, sacrifice. Due to destiny, I have been able to take *darshan* of this sagacious person, knower of the past, present and future.

167. "You know the reason for my unhappiness. O', compassionate one, please remove it. O', kind one, do not send this ardent devotee away from your feet".

168. Sainath felt pity for him. He Said: "Do not worry unnecessarily. Your misfortunes, henceforth, will start diminishing".

169. He gave him the *prasad* of *udi* in his hand and laid his boon-giving hand on his head. "Allah will fulfil your heart's desire", with these words he blessed the *Shethji*.

170. Then, Ruttonji took his permission to leave and returned to Nanded. Whatever had happened was described in detail to Ganu Das.

171. "I had a good *darshan*, as desired. My heart was full of joy. I have received his boon and assurance and have been blessed.

172. "Everything went off fine. But I did not understand one thing. What was it that Maharaj said? I did not follow it at all".

173. " 'You gave me Rupees three and fourteen annas earlier. That I know'. Explain to me clearly what these words of Baba meant.

174. What rupees and what annas! When did I give him earlier? I do not understand the mystery of it, because I went to Shirdi for the first time.

175. I cannot solve this mystery. I feel that this is an intriguing puzzle. It is beyond my comprehension. Can you please enlighten me?"

176. This is a mystery, Das Ganu thought to himself. What could be the meaning? He couldn't come to any conclusion.

177. After a lot of thinking he recalled an *Aulia*, who was called Mauli Saheb. He was reminded of him.

178. He was a Muslim. His behaviour was like that of a Saint. He worked as a coolie for his living, leaving himself to the mercy of fate.

179. If I give his life story in detail, it would be a deviation from our own subject. Besides, the life of this Mauli Saheb is known to everybody in Nanded.

180. At the time when the visit to Shirdi was decided, Mauli Saheb had casually come to *Shethji's* house, on his own.

181. There was deep mutual affection between them; so, he was offered fruits, refreshments, garland as was the custom.

182. *Shethji* was inspired to offer a light meal to Mauli; and Das Ganu thought, at that moment, of checking the expenses of the same.

183. He asked for the details of the expenses, added each and every pie and totalled it, which turned out exactly,

184. to be Rupees three and fourteen annas, neither more nor less. Every one was astonished that Baba had known this and had, as it were a receipt for it.

185. Sai Maharaj was a store of knowledge. Sitting in the *Masjid*, he was aware of everything – the past, the present and the future, wherever and in whatever country it may happen.

186. Unless Sai Samartha had become one with all beings, could it be possible for him to experience or to tell others, this kind of things?

187. Nanded is far away from Shirdi. There is a lot of distance between the two. Besides, these two Saints did not know each other. How could Sai have got this information?

188. Sai Maharaj is one person and Maulibuva some one else. This is a misconception of dualism. In reality, there is no difference between them.

189. Maulibuva's soul is the same as that which resides in every being. But he is blessed who knows the secret of oneness of soul.

190. Though the outer bodies are two, internally they are united. It is wrong even to use the words 'those two', for they were never separate.

191. They both had the same knowledge, same soul, same aim. Both were the essence of the one supreme energy and of the same nature.

192. There is a big distance between Shirdi and Nanded. But their minds were in unison. They had the same soul and as it were, the same body. Therefore, they exchanged the communication.

193. How marvellous are the Saints and Sages. They are, as it were, the wireless machines without the cables! Anything might take place anywhere in the world. They are aware of it from the beginning to the end.

194. Later, after a suitable passage of time, God blessed Ruttonji. His wife conceived. The tree of hope blossomed.

195. At an auspicious time, his wife delivered. The blessings bore fruit. A jewel of a son was born and Ruttonji was delighted.

196. His contentment could be described as that of abundant rains after many years of drought, because he had got a son.

197. Later on, the family tree bloomed. Branches spread out, in due course flourished and bore fruit with sons and daughters. Ruttonji was happy[14].

198. Later on, also he went for Sai *darshan* with whose blessings his desires were fulfilled. He was truly contented.

199. Even though a mango tree blossoms fully during spring all the fruits do not ripen. Similarly out of the twelve children[15], only four survived and lead happy lives in Nanded.

200. Ruttonji being of a gentle temperament, believed in cheerfully accepting whatever happens due to destiny. So he did not regret this at all.

201. Now the gist of the next story is that Sai pervades the whole world, both animate and inanimate. A person can truly have the experience of this, wherever he may be.

202. How the great Guru was pleased because of faith and devotion with a poor, helpless man from Thane, whose surname was Cholkar.

203. How this man came to make a vow to Sai, without ever having seen him before; and how his wishes were fulfilled and the experience he received from Sai.

204. Just as *bhajan* is no *bhajan* without love; reading a book without comprehension is no reading; so is praying to God without a sense of devotion. All these efforts are futile.

205. So is knowledge without experience like a forehead without the *kumkum tilak*. This is not a bookish statement but you can test it and prove it.

206. Why is this book about Sai's *leelas* being written? I do not know. Why am I so involved with it? It is written by Sai through me. Therefore, he alone knows the significance.

207. Besides, to write such a book, authoritative knowledge is required. But I am serving Sai and am only his subordinate. I am under his command.

208. Listeners are like thirsty *Chatak* birds. Sai Samartha is the cloud of self – contentement, who pours showers in the form of his life story to quench the thirst.

209. Let my body completely prostrate in the dust of his lotus feet, at whose command this speech is inspired and whose life story it describes.

210. He is the inspiration behind the words. He is the one who tells his own story. Therefore, let my wayward mind rest at his feet.

211. Just as these *bhajans* through speech and body, so also my mind should constantly think about Sai, who is the source of unending happiness. I am a humble servant of Sai.

212. In reality, Sai himself manifests in the form of the narration of his life story and the inspiration. But, is he different from the listeners? Nay, the listener is also not separate from Sai!

213. Seemingly, it appears like a simple biography. But this whole drama is played by Sai. He himself becomes the actor and lovingly stages the powerful *drama*.

214. Unfathomable is Sai Baba's story. He makes the devotees undergo mysterious experiences. He has made me instrumental in writing and thus pleases his devotees and hordes of followers.

215. This not a story but a treasure trove of joy. It is the best, nectar like sweet-meat for one's self which should be enjoyed with faith and devotion, by one who is exceptionally happy.

216. Wonderous and great is Guru's Grace. His greatness should always be remembered by us. Therefore, he has served the devotees by toiling over this book for their pleasure.

217. If this book is sung lovingly, the pleasures of listening will enhance and understanding the meaning and intent, enrich the devotees' love and devotion which will grow manifold.

218. If you listen to it day and night, the bonds of worldly attachment will be broken. The triple consciousness of the meditator, the object meditated upon and the meditation will disappear and the listeners will be full of happiness.

219. Hemad surrenders with singleness of heart at the feet of Sai, firmly holding them, "Let me not forget you even momentarily, but remain forever at your feet".

May there be well-being. This is the end of the fourteenth chapter, of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Ruttonji's Meeting with Sai".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

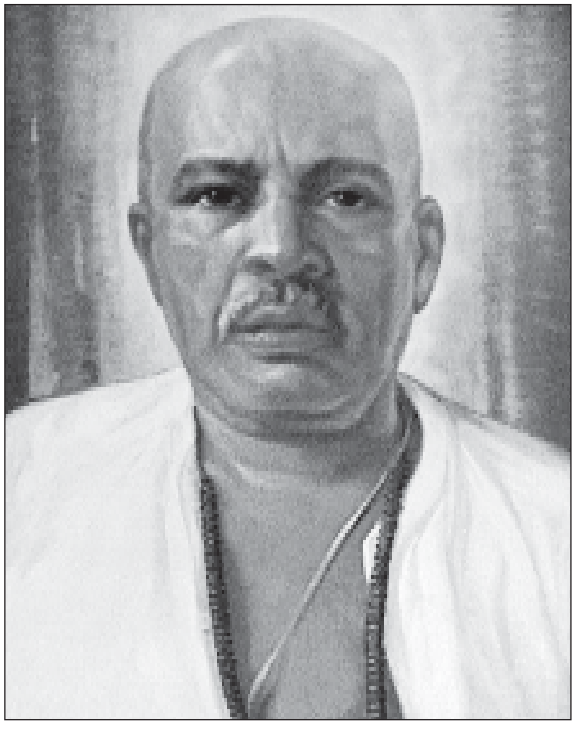
May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Absorption into the essence of Brahman; resemblance to God; nearness to God and residing with the Deity.
2. Sweet-meat.
3. Corporal, oral and mental purification.
4. Ruttonji Shapurji Wadia, a mill contractor.
5. Necklace of glass and golden bead, and a golden coin.
6. *Anima, Mahima, Garima, Laghima, Prapti, Prakamya, Ishitva, Vashitva* – super human powers to make oneself small, big etc.
7. The treasures of Kuber.
8. Money of small denomination.
9. Religious ritual for observance of a vow.
10. The Creator.
11. Advice or lesson.
12. As per *Brihadarnyak Upanishad* Chapter 5
13. Shrimad Bhagvad Gita Chapter 16, Verse 21.
14. How Rao Bhadur Hari Vinayak Sathe went to Shirdi has been described in Chapter 31 of *Bhakta Leelamrut* by Dass Ganu. At that time Maharaj had blessed him – "You get married and you will get a son." Accordingly Sathe got married. After some time, his wife conceived. But instead of a son, a daughter was born. Sathe was , thereby, very disappointed. Later on, his wife conceived a second time. Then also, he had a daughter. Naturally, Sathe was very saddened.

But Maharaj's blessings were not futile. The third time Sathe's wife conceived and a son was born, and that son is doing well and flourishing with Maharaj's grace.

15. In ovi 72, it is mentioned that he had twelve daughters before the son was born. So there is some discrepancy here about the number of children.



Ganesh Dattatreya Sahasrabudhe
alias Das Ganu Maharaj

15
The Story of Cholkar's Sugar

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Those whose meritorious deeds of their past lives have borne fruit get Sai's *darshan*. They are not harmed by the three- fold difficulties and it provides the means to achieve spiritual progress.
2. Now, meditating on your Guru for a moment, oh you listeners! please I beg of you, to give me your attention and be in a frame of mind to listen.
3. "We know that you are there to tell the story. Why are you taking this trouble unnecessarily?" Please do not say this. Pardon me. You are comparable to the ocean.
4. For the ocean, though brimming with water, does not send back the rivers; even though the clouds pour thousand - fold, it gives refuge to the waters.
5. You, listeners, are as virtuous as the ocean and I wish to immerse myself in it. Do not, I beg of you, repulse me. It is not right to reject the weak.
6. The pure waters of the Ganga as well as the stream from the village are both accommodated by the ocean. When they merge with the ocean, there is no commotion.
7. Therefore, the urge to listen to the story of the Saint which you are fostering will by itself be fruitful, if you look at me benevolently.
8. If you partake of this nectar in the form of the life story, with patience and faith, loving devotion will spring within you and the listeners will be gratified.
9. The devotees will easily achieve the supreme state of existence. The listeners will be full of devotion and freedom from attachment. For

those full of faith, they will receive happiness and peace; and for all, in general, contentment.

10. Listening to these stories from the mouth of the Guru will eradicate the troubles and anxieties pertaining to the world. Bliss will be born in the minds of the listeners and knowledge of the soul will dawn upon them.
11. In this chapter, there will be the description of how the loving devotees prayed to Sai and how he gave them *darshan*, and was pleased with them. Now, listen to it all.
12. If a cat has just fed her new born and goes out, then when she returns her kittens longingly return to her, and again and again rush to her with love to suckle.
13. Then she gets fed up and growls which quietens the babies for a while. No sooner than the mother cat is quietly resting, they circle around her and again suckle.
14. When they lovingly nudge and suck, milk flows out of the mother cat. Then she forgets her earlier growling and spreads herself on the ground with love.
15. As her love overpowers her reluctance, she hugs her own babies with her four legs tightly; again and again licks them and fondles them. Oh, what a wonderful sight it is!
16. As her abdomen is scratched by their sharp nails, her love increases and the milk flows more abundantly.
17. Just as those babies' love and affection makes the mother give more milk, your devotion at the feet of Sai will melt his heart.
18. Once, the people of Thane requested that peerless *kirtankar*, Ganu Das, to perform *kirtan* at Koupineshwar (temple).
19. Ganu Das obliged the gentlemen at their request, but he did not demand or ask for even a pie.
20. Not a single pie was paid for the *kirtan*. He did not wear garments on his upper body and was bare-headed, wearing only a *pancha*[1]. Still, listeners flocked to the *kirtan*.
21. There is a story behind this mode of dress. You will enjoy it when you hear it. Listen to it with your full attention. Wonder at Baba.
22. Once, Ganu Das was going to do a *Katha* at Shirdi. So he set off properly dressed with a long coat, *uparna*[2], and *pheta*[3] on head.
23. According to custom, he happily went to Baba to bow at his feet. On seeing him, Baba said: "Oh, now you have adorned yourself like a bridegroom!

24. Where are you going so dressed up?" Baba asked him. Das Ganu replied: "I am going to perform *kirtan*."
25. Baba said to him, further: "Why have you taken so much trouble over dressing up? Why do you have long coat, *uparna* and *pheta*? We do not need all these things.
26. "Take them off in front of me. Why burden your body with them?" As per his orders, he took them off and laid them at his feet.
27. Since then, till this day, Ganu Das wears no upper garment and makes no show. He carries *chiplis* [4] in his hands and a *mala* [5] round his neck at the time of *kirtan*.
28. Though this is not generally accepted, it is of a pure origin. This was the tradition of Narada, the most enlightened of enlightened sages.
29. This is the original school of '*Naradiyan kirtan'* from which the Haridasas originated. They did not bother about the outward glamour but stressed purification of soul.
30. Only the lower half of the body is covered. *Chiplis* are used and the *veena*[6] is played. Hari's name is loudly chanted. Such is the well-known and pure image of Narada.
31. With the grace of Sai Samartha, Das Ganu composed stories describing the saints and performed *kirtans* free. Thus, he became famous.
32. He was truly instrumental in spreading the zest of Sai devotion. He brought to high tide, the ocean of Sai love and self – contentment.
33. We are very grateful to the foremost of the devotees Chandorkar, who has definitely been the root cause for increasing the devotion to Sai's feet.
34. Even Das Ganu came here because of Chandorkar. He performed *kirtans* everywhere, going from one place to another, and people started singing Sai's praises.
35. Maharaj's fame had already spread to Pune, Nagar and Sholapur. But because of these two, people from the Konkan developed faith.
36. To them, also, goes the credit for the growth of Sai devotion in and around Bombay. Sai Maharaj, the compassionate one, manifested there through them!
37. At Sree Koupineshwar Temple, in the midst of the reverbrations of the *kirtan* of Sai's kindness and the tumultous jubilation with the Lord's name, Cholkar felt goose pimples over his body.
38. Numerous people came to listen to the *kirtans*, but they liked it for

different reasons. Some appreciated Buva's intimate knowledge of the subject and some liked his expressions and gestures.

39. Some only appreciated the singing and would say how wonderfully Buva sings and gets carried away with the devotional singing of Vitthal's name and how he dances with exuberance for the love of Vitthal.

40. Some enjoy the first part which expounds the philosophical thought; some love to listen to the story part of it; some like the dramatisation in which the Haridas indulges mimicing local characters; some love the words and poetry.

41. Whether a buva is ordinary or a scholar or so clever as to give different meanings, references, derivations or expert in telling stories in the latter half of the *kirtan* – in this manner, the listening of a *kirtan* depends on different things.

42. Such listeners are many. But by listening they develop faith and devotion. But a state of mind whereby a listener has absolute love of God and devotion at the feet of Sai, is rare.

43. One may listen for a long time but if it just accumulates one layer over another of false knowledge, can it be called the right outcome of listening? Such listening would be futile.

44. How can we call a thing soap if it does not cleanse? How can it be called listening if it does not remove false knowledge?

45. Cholkar[7] was already a devout man. He felt pangs of love for Sai and said to himself: 'Baba, merciful one, protect this humble one'.

46. He was an ordinary probationer incapable of looking after his family financially. He wanted a higher post in the government and put this burden on Baba.

47. Covetous persons take a vow, saying that if their wish is fulfilled, they would feed the Brahmins, as per the menu set by them, to their hearts' desire and also give gifts to them.

48. The rich, by way of a vow, promise to feed a thousand or donate a hundred cows, if their desires are fulfilled.

49. But Cholkar was, as it is, a poor man. He also wanted to make a vow. Therefore, remembering Sree Sai's feet, he spoke humbly thus:

50. "Baba, I am poor and have to look after a family. My life depends on my job. I have to pass an examination to become permanent.

51. "I have prepared with a lot of effort. I solely depend on passing the examination. Otherwise. I will lose this job which I hold on probation and I will be deprived of the little that I earn.

52. "If I pass by your grace, I will present myself at your feet and distribute sugar candy in your name. This is my firm resolution".
53. In this manner, he took a vow. His wishes were fulfilled and he was happy. But it took time for him to complete the vow. Therefore, he gave up sugar.
54. He would need some money on the way. It was not proper to go empty-handed. Therefore, he would go on postponing. Thus the days passed by.
55. It is possible to cross over Nane Ghat[8] of the high Sahyadri mountain but it is difficult to cross the threshold of the home, for a householder.
56. Till the vow of going to Shirdi was not fulfilled, Cholkar did not eat anything made of sugar. He even took tea without sugar.
57. Some days passed by like this. Then the time came and he went to Shirdi. He fulfilled the vow and was happy.
58. As soon as he had Sai's *darshan*, Cholkar rolled at his feet, and bowing to Baba he was extremely happy.
59. With a pure heart he distributed sugar, offered coconut and said: "To-day all my wishes have borne fruit".
60. He was jubilant with Sai's *darshan* and was happy with the conversation he had with him. As he was Jog's guest, he had to leave along with Jog.
61. As Jog got up to leave, his guest got up also and Baba said to Jog: "Give him lots of cups of tea with plenty of sugar".
62. No sooner did Cholkar hear these significant words, he was surprised. His eyes were filled with tears of joy and he put his head at his feet.
63. Jog was surprised but Cholkar was doubly so because both (Baba and he) knew the reason and understood each other.
64. Baba had nothing to do with tea; so, why did he remember it at this moment? It was to convince Cholkar and stamp him with devotion.
65. Immediately, this was enough of a hint. He said: "I have received your promised sugar. The period of sacrifice for you is over, Cholkar.
66. "I know the state of your mind at the time of taking the vow and about your self-imposed punishment for the postponement. Though you have kept it a secret, I have come to understand it all.
67. "Any one of you, wherever you are, whenever you come to me, with your hand outstretched, with devotion, I am there to respond to your faith, day and night.
68. "Though I am bodily present at this place and you may be beyond

the seven seas, and doing anything there, I am aware of it immediately.

69. "You may go anywhere on the face of this earth, I am always with you. I reside in your heart and I am within you.

70. "You should always bow down to that Me who thus resides in your heart. I am also the same Me who resides in the hearts of all beings.

71. "Therefore, whomsoever you come across, at home, outside or anywhere in the course of life, I am within them and I am myself present in them.

72. "All living creatures – insects, ants, creatures of the water and the sky, dogs and pigs – I am always present within them. I am in all and everywhere.

73. "Do not keep at a distance from me. There is no difference between you and Me. Whosoever regards Me in this way, he is indeed fortunate."

74. This story, though seemingly brief, is yet full of merit. How sweet it was for Cholkar and how much it strengthened his devotion!

75. Whatever passed in his mind, Baba gave him proof of it in this way. What a skill, the sages possess!

76. Baba's words are invaluable. They penetrate deep into the hearts of the devotees, nurture their love and make their devotion one-pointed.

77. To quench the thirst of a Chatak, the clouds shower water kindly, with the result that the whole earth is cooled. So did it happen in this case.

78. Poor Cholkar was a complete stranger. Das Ganu's *kirtan* was instrumental in his making that vow and Baba was also pleased with him.

79. It was because of him that this amazing episode took place and gave him a glimpse of the Sage's heart. Baba was always ready to create a situation to teach.

80. Cholkar was just incidental, for the sake of the good of all the devotees. Baba's skills are beyond comprehension. We can only look and wonder.

81. Describing a similar episode, I will bring this chapter to an end – how somebody put a question and how Baba explained to him.

82. Once, when Baba was sitting on his seat in the *Masjid*, a devotee who was sitting in front of him heard a lizard chirrup.

83. The falling down of a lizard and its utterances! Do they portend anything? He casually asked Baba a question, out of curiosity.

84. "Baba, why is this lizard on the wall behind chirruping? What is the meaning? Is it a bad omen?"

85. Baba replied to him: "The lizard is joyous in anticipation of her sister's arrival from Aurangabad to meet her".
86. At the outset, the lizard is an insignificant creature. How could she have a father, mother, sister or brother? What does any relationship mean to it?
87. Therefore, Baba merely said something jocularly in reply, he believed; and therefore, sat quietly for a while.
88. In the meantime, a gentleman arrived from Aurangabad on horseback to take Baba's *darshan*. At that time, Baba was having his bath.
89. He had to go further but his horse would not move without his fodder. Therefore, he set out for the bazar to purchase some green grams.
90. The man who had raised the query about the lizard was watching with interest this newly arrived traveller, who emptied the feeding bag which he was carrying under his arm and dusted it.
91. As soon as the bag was hit on the ground, one lizard came out of it, and hastily ran, with fright, while everyone was watching.
92. Baba said then to the person who had asked the question: "Now, keep an eye on her. This is the sister of that lizard. Look at the marvellous behaviour".
93. She started moving immediately in the direction of that noise of the chirruping of her sister, swaying joyously.
94. The meeting of the two sisters after a long time took place. They kissed and hugged each other closely. Their affection was exhibited in an incomparable way.
95. They went around each other; they turned round and round happily; went straight, horizontally, diagonally and danced about freely.
96. Where is the city of Aurangabad? And where is Shirdi? What explanation is there about all this? And how did the horseman arrive there suddenly with the lizard?
97. The lizard, undoubtedly, from Aurangabad had in some way crept into the horse's feeding bag. But how did her arrival coincide with the question and answer session?
98. Why should the lizard chirrup? What inspired the question? Why should the explanation be given? Why should it be immediately proved?
99. Such was the unique coincidence. Love of humour is universal. Saints deliberately create incidences to increase the welfare of the devotees.

100. Let us reflect – if this intellectually curious person was not present there or no one had asked the question, how would have Sai's greatness been revealed and who would have understood the significance?
101. Many times, many people have heard lizards chirruping, but does anyone ask the meaning of their chirruping or about their language?
102. In short, these are the dramas in the world. The reins are not perceivable and are beyond understanding. If anyone can understand, all are amazed.
103. On the contrary, where a lizard is heard chirruping, it is supposed to be ominous. If the word 'Krishna, Krishna' is uttered, the bad effect is warded off. So people say.
104. Whatever the significance of this sound, it does not matter. To make a devotee believe firmly in him, Baba employed this supreme means.
105. Whoever reads this chapter with respect, or recites it a fixed number of times regularly, will find his difficulties warded off by Gururaya. Bear it well in your mind.
106. Whoever puts his head truly at his feet with single minded devotion, he is the only saviour, the protector for him, the only one who gives assurance, the doer, the warder of all difficulties.
107. Do not have doubts about this. Sainath is really so. I am telling you the essence of my experience for the sake of the good of the devotees.
108. "I am omnipresent. There is nothing else besides Me in this world. I exist not only in this world but in all the three[9]".
109. Wherever there is such unparalleled belief, there is no scope for fear. When the being realises that the Pure Consciousness fills all, that person is devoid of ego and pride.
110. Hemadpant surrenders to Sai. He does not wish to leave his feet, even for a moment because they lead him across the ocean of mundane existence. Listen to the sweet narration.
111. In the next chapter there is a beautiful incident, which Sai, the Great Master, creates about how the knowledge of *Brahman* is asked by people, in a trice.
112. A certain greedy person asks about the knowledge of *Brahman*; and Maharaj will, as it were, take it out of his pocket and present it to him.
113. When the listeners hear that story, they will come to know Baba's powers. Unless desires are completely given up, it is impossible to attain *Brahman*, without any doubt.
114. No one stops to consider the worthiness of the aspirant. Maharaj will explain who can achieve it and how.

115. I am his most humble servant. I beg of you and expect from you to listen with enthusiasm to the exuberance of my love for Sai.
116. It will give you pleasure, and enlighten you. Therefore, listeners pay attention and you will understand the greatness of saints.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the fifteenth chapter, of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant impelled by Saints and virtuous people called "The Story of Cholkar's Sugar".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Poor man's *dhoti* which was short and also used as a towel.
2. Small cloth worn loosely over the shoulders.
3. Cloth head-dress.
4. Pair of sticks used to clap together, with metal discs at two ends.
5. *Mala* could be a garland of flowers or beads of *tulsi*.
6. Indian lute.
7. He was a poor man, full of faith, working in the Thane Civil Court, as an apprentice.
8. It is in Thane District, in Murbad Taluka.
9. The earth, the sky and the nether world.

'Ever blessing' *Padukas* of Baba.

The meeting of the two sisters after a long time took place. They kissed and hugged each other closely. Their affection was exhibited in an incomparable way. (Ch.15, ovi 94)

16

The Narration of the Knowledge of *Brahman*

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Let us do obeisance to the King of Kings, the Lord Paramount - who Graces the Throne of Peace, the Sovereign of the Kingdom of Self-Contentment, His Majesty the Guru - the only Resort.
2. Pure devotion and the natural state of mind, serve you with whisks on both sides, and self – realisation and experience of truth fan you on both sides, respectfully.
3. The Knowledge of the Self is holding the Royal Umbrella over your head; Peace and Consciousness are the holders of the Sceptre. The six foes, such as illusion and greed etc., cannot survive there even for a moment.
4. Oh, how glittering is the assembly. There are four Vedas, six Shastras and eighteen Puranas as court poets. The awning of Pure Consciousness shines brilliantly like a moon and the happiness born of self – contentment is spread everywhere.
5. Dispassion, Devotion, Pure Knowledge, Listening, Concentration, Meditation, Self-realisation and Experience – are the eight ministers who are in your service.
6. Peace and Restraint are the precious stones which shine brightly in this divine necklace round your neck. Your speech is sweet, like the ripples of the nectar on the surface of the ocean, in the form of *vedic* knowledge.
7. You are holding the Sword of Knowledge in your hand, ready to strike, the blade of which is polished and sharp, at the sight of which the tree in the form of the material world is trembling.
8. Hail to you, O Unblemished and Imperishable One, who transcends all attributes, King of *Yogis* – you have taken the bodily form to oblige others, and for the uplift of the humble.

9. In the previous chapter, it was described how the wish of the devotee was fulfilled, how his vow was completed and how he was given a hint of what was in his mind.
10. A Sadguru has no desires of his own always; therefore, what can a disciple do to fulfil his wishes? It is he who serves his disciples and makes them desireless.
11. He will accept even a leaf or a flower, if offered with devotion; but, the same when offered with pride, he will not care to even look at it.
12. The Oceans of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss do not care for outward form; but when something is offered with faith they accept with genuine pleasure.
13. Pretending to wear a cloak of ignorance, they give wisdom and take away our ignorance. Without violating modesty they teach the principle of life sweetly.
14. Serving them faithfully, the follower achieves oneness with *Brahman*. Therefore, abandoning all other ways and means, be absorbed in the services of the Guru.
15. For any slackness in the service or any attempt to be smart[1] will certainly lead the disciple into trouble. One should have full faith at the Guru*'s* feet.
16. How can a disciple do anything on his own? It is the Sadguru who places him in an advantageous position. The disciple does not understand the difficulties that are to befall him. The Guru wards them off without his knowledge.
17. In all the three worlds there is not another more generous giver than the Guru. Let us surrender by being the humblest of the humble and surrender to him and only to him.
18. If we compare him to the *Chintamani* [2], the *Chintamani* gives only that which is wished for; but a Guru gives something which is not even imagined, to the astonishment of the devotee.
19. If we compare him to the *Kalpataru* [3], the *Kalpataru* only fulfils the wishes that are asked for; but the *Gururaya* will grant the *Nirvikalpa* [4] unexpectedly.
20. The *Kamadhenu* [5] fulfils the wish that is expressed. But the Guru – *dhenu* is still greater. He is famous as 'He, who gives that which is Inconceivable.' Who else can deserve this title?
21. Now, I beseech the listeners, to listen to the story to which I had referred in the previous chapter about how a person desirous of knowledge of the Brahman received it.

22. Listen in what manner Baba satisfied a seeker of the knowledge of *Brahman* and preached to his devotees. Now listen to that significant discourse.
23. The Saints are always free of desires as they have fulfilled every desire. The devotees are extremely covetous and always dissatisfied.
24. Some ask for progeny; some for unassailable power and enormous wealth; some ask for faith and devotion; but rarely there was one who asked for salvation from this worldly life.
25. Once a certain simple devotee, who was completely engaged in amassing wealth, arrived to take *darshan*, having heard of Baba's fame.
26. In his household there was immense wealth, numerous progeny and hordes of servants and maids. He thought of taking Baba's *darshan*, as he was famous as being a munificent person.
27. "Baba is full of divine knowledge; a jewel amongst *Sadhus* and *Saints*. I shall place my head at his feet – he whose marvels are inconceivable!
28. "Since I have no need for anything else, I will ask for the knowledge of *Brahman*. If I achieve this easily, I'll consider myself as the blessed one".
29. Then, his friend told him that "it is not easy to know *Brahman*. It is difficult for an avaricious person like you to attain it.
30. "He who is not aware of the means of happiness other than wealth, wife and children, for him *Brahman* is chimerical. It cannot attain peace for you.
31. "When the faculties become weak, nobody honours such a person in the world. At that stage, such people sit idle and talk of *Brahman*, like spinning yarn on the spindle.
32. "Such is your curiosity for *Brahman*. Close-fisted as you are and miserly, you will not find anyone who will fulfil this desire of yours".
33. Nevertheless, this aspirant set out for Shirdi in a *tonga* engaged for a return journey and reached Sai's feet.
34. He took Sai's *darshan* and bowed down at his feet. Then Sai addressed him sweetly. Now listen to what he said.
35. The stories of Sai are like the wish - fulfilling tree, which when watered with concentration will grow strong. When more and more respect is paid by the listeners, it will bear more and more fruits.
36. All the branches will be full of sap. It will blossom with fragrant flowers. It will be heavily laden with sweet, juicy fruits. The wishes of all the devotees will be fulfilled.

37. He (the visitor) said: "Baba, show *Brahman* to me. I have approached you with this aspiration only. People say that Baba from Shirdi can show *Brahman* within no time.

38. "Therefore, I have come such a long distance. I am very tired of travelling. But, if I am able to acquire *Brahman*, I will consider myself blessed".

39. Baba said: "Do not worry. I will show you *Brahman* readily just now. There is no question here for deferred payment. Seekers like you are rare.

40. "Many people ask for wealth; or ask for cures for ailments; or ask for power and honour; and, always happiness.

41. "People come running to Shirdi, only for the sake of temporal happiness and become the followers of a *fakir* like me. Nobody asks for *Brahman* ever.

42. Such people (seeking worldly benefits) are in plenty. But I experience a drought where people like you are concerned. I long for those seeking *Brahman*. This, seems to be an opportune time for me.

43. Because of the fear of this *Brahman*, the sun and the moon are disciplined and they rise and set regularly. Sunlight and moonlight occur in regular cycles.

44. The existence of the seasons like winter, spring etc. is because of *Brahman*. Gods like Indra and the kings reign over their kingdoms properly and protect their subjects also – the root cause of all this is *Brahman*.

45. Therefore, before giving up this body, wise men try to attain the knowledge of *Brahman*, because no doubt the cycle of birth and death will otherwise continue uninterruptedly.

46. Therefore, till that *Brahman* is realised, even if the body perishes, the ties of the world will continue to affect and rebirth will be unavoidable.

47. Why only *Brahman*! I will show you everything – the essence of *Brahman* which has enveloped you from head to foot. I will distinguish it from the rest".

48. Oh! How sweet that nectar – like speech! It was the mine of happiness containing the doctrine of the identity of the human soul and the divine essence. It is capable of granting salvation even to those beings who are in doubt.

49. Even those who are engaged in the short-lived pleasures of the senses, from dawn to night, will be taken on the path established by the *Shastras*, by Baba's words.

50. If *Chintamani* is pleased, material possessions will be acquired; if *Mahendra*[6] is pleased, wealth and power of the heavens will be achieved.

51. The Guru's uniqueness exceeds this. There is no benefactor like the Guru. If he is pleased he makes the devotee realise the rare *Brahman*.

52. By listening to this sweet story, the sorrows of the world will be forgotten. Baba knows the way how to teach the seekers of *Brahman*.

53. So be it. Then he made him sit for a while and got him engaged in something else and gave the impression that he had forgotten that question.

54. Then what Baba did? He called a lad near him and asked him to go quickly to Nandu[7], with a message:

55. "Give a loan of five rupees, Baba has dire need for it. Lend it to him quickly for a short while. Go and tell him so".

56. The lad went to Nandu's house. His door was locked. Returning immediately, he gave this information.

57. Baba said: "Go again. Bala[8], the grocer, must be at home. Give him the same message. Bring the money. Go".

58. This trip was also in vain. Bala also was not at home at that time. The lad narrated everything that took place to Baba.

59. Baba sent him to one or two more places, in haste. The boy got tired of these unprofitable trips but could not procure even a red cent.

60. Maharaj, the omniscient, was fully aware that neither Nandu, nor Bala the grocer, would be at home at that time. Baba knew this very well.

61. Sai was *Brahman* Incarnate. How could he be desperate about five rupees? But, this play was enacted for the seeker of the knowledge of *Brahman*.

62. When a guest arrives at home, whatever sweetmeats or delicacies are made in his honour, are also enjoyed by the others.

63. So, making this person keen on *Brahman*-knowledge an excuse, Maharaj taught the devotees for the sake of everybody's good.

64. Sainath knew that the *Brahmarthi* was carrying a wad of notes of two hundred and fifty rupees in his pocket.

65. Did the *Brahmarthi* not understand? Did he not have eyes? Having the bundle of notes in his pocket, he remained caught in his doubts[9].

66. Sai wanted a loan of five rupees and that too for a short while. Yet,

he did not have the confidence to give it and he was asking for knowledge of *Brahman*!

67. Sai Maharaj was true to his words; and the amount that was asked for was also petty. Yet when the thought of giving came, doubts assailed him.

68. How meagre is the sum of five rupees! But he had no heart to give even that much! He who could not help even to that extent, then that person is greed personified.

69. If there had been any other simple, straight forward person, who had genuine love for Baba, he would not have silently watched this whole business of borrowing.

70. That person, who was so thirsty for the knowledge of *Brahman*, did he not understand even this much? I have no doubt about it. But he was over powered by the greed for money.

71. At least he should have sat quietly. No – not even that! He was in a hurry to go back and said: "O', Baba Sai, show me *Brahman* on the spot".

72. Baba said: "To show you *Brahman*, where you are sitting, I have tried certain means so far. Did you not follow anything?"

73. "For the sake of *Brahman*, the five pranas, the five senses of action and perception, ego, intellect and mind have to be surrendered.

74. "The path of knowledge of *Brahman* is difficult. It is not easy to follow for all and sundry. When the time is ripe, it appears before that fortunate person, all of a sudden.

75. "That person who is detached from all worldly attachments upto the stage of attaining the feet of *Brahmadev*, he alone is qualified for the knowledge of *Brahman*. He has no attachment for anything else.

76. "Even if someone were to impart the knowledge of *Brahman* to one without the least bit of detachment, would he be successful?

77. "The knowledge of *Brahman* can be attained flawlessly by the highest category of aspirants but mediocre persons are always tradition bound and must proceed stage by stage.

78. "The former ones have a spiritual flight, like the path of a bird; the latter follow the steps of tradition, according to the *Shastras*. But for the incapable person, the whole effort about *Brahman* is useless.

79. "Without that self-control and discrimination, there is no other sure means of achieving *Brahman*. Though this is the truth told by the *Vedas*, can it be possible for everyone to practise?

80. "It is only through deligence and practice, when even your bones seem ready to disintegrate, that the Guru's grace descends and enlightenment dawns slowly.

81. "I am God. I am the Controller. When such ego takes hold of *Brahmadev*, he tends to forget his Real Self as the Supreme Spirit, then the universe is created.

82. "I am that *Brahman*'. When this is realised, then he who has realised it surrenders to the Supreme Self; and, for him, the illusion of the existence of the universe disappears. This is proclaimed by the *Shrutis*.

83. "When there is the true knowledge of the Self, that person's entire nature becomes one with *Brahman*. At such a stage, the whole universe burns down in the fire of *Brahman* and the world turns into ashes.

84. "When the illusion is removed, similar is the state of mind of the human beings. The rope, the ray of the sun and the mother of pearl shell – the illusion that they are different is removed immediately.

85. "The true knowledge of the mother of pearl is the same as the knowledge of the silver and vice versa. At the time of the end of this illusion, the belief about silver is removed and the pure form of mother of pearl and the knowledge of it appears before the mind.

86. "This is all due to reciprocal attraction between the viewer and the things viewed. Light the lamp of knowledge and wash away the impurities of ignorance. This will annihilate illusions.

87. "If the bondage of birth and death had not been there, why would there be pursuit of *moksha* ? Who would have bothered about the philosophy of the *Vedas* and also this discourse.

88. "I am bound. I want to be free. One who firmly thinks so is the only person who deserves that knowledge. Neither the scholar nor the very ignorant person is fit for it.

89. "But when you are never bound why talk of freedom? This is the truth. Everybody knows that being bound and freedom are due to the balance of the *gunas* (*sattva*, *raja* and *tama*).

90. "In the absence of duality, who will bind whom? Who will release whom? No one is bound and no one is free, when duality and oneness are not there.

91. "Does the sun create day and night? No. It is the delusion of the viewer. The sun is not involved.

92. "I am the doer. I am the enjoyer. When a person has this pride, he

experiences heaven and hell – happiness and miseries – and attachment to sensory pleasures goes on increasing.

93. "The soul is eternal, ancient, permanent, devoid of changes due to birth and death. It is denoted by the letters *AUM*. It has no beginning. It is infinite and everlasting.

94. "He who regards the body as the soul; and that he is separate and the world is separate from him – for him, self-realisation becomes difficult and he cannot attain *Brahman*.

95. "Destroy speech and all other senses. Make the mind steadfast. Then subvert that mind. Penetrate deep into the intellect.

96. "That intellect which exists like a light, concentrate your mind on it, because all the activities of the sense organs, including the mind, are under the control of the intellect.

97. "For the existence of the pot, the first essential is clay. The intellect stands in the same relation to the sense organs. Their permanent state is so, because of the power of the intellect.

98. "The intellect is all pervading. Thus it engulfs all the senses and the mind. Therefore the intellect should be fixed in the Supreme Self and the soul should be surrendered to that Supreme Self.

99. "When such harmony is achieved, self-realisation takes place. As a result, the delusion about the silver (of the oster shell), the mirage (of the desert), and the snake (rope looking like a snake) are understood to be errors of perception.

100. "It is that Self which is complete and is without birth and death, and about whom the sages always say that you cannot achieve permanent good without its attainment.

101. "A cause is necessary for all action. But the soul is self born and causeless. It is ancient yet young. It is beyond the intellect.

102. "It is like the vast sky, limitless. It is beyond beginning and end. It rests on *AUM*, the primeval sound. It is stable and cannot be stained.

103. "*Parabrahma*[10] is knowable. *Apar Brahma*[11] is attainable. *AUM*, their sign is their symbol to be meditated upon always, and to be worshipped for ever.

104. "*AUM* is the essence of the four Vedas. It is in the form of *Pranav* or *Aumkar*. Its meaning is actually non-meaning. It is the thought behind all knowledge.

105. "The *Vedas* themselves proclaim that knowledge, which people acquire through great effort and for the sake of which they observe austerities such as celibacy, that is known as attainment of excellence.

106. "Be it so. Though it is difficult to achieve, it is easier for the seeker if he has the grace of the Guru.

107. "If one starts controlling the senses beginning with the gross ones and reaching the subtle ones in the regular order as prescribed by the Vedas, the seeker can achieve it easily.

108. "That is the *AUM* – a word, a sentence, a letter which is the essence of all *tapas* [12]. By the very utterance the meaning is revealed, and constant repetition gives enlightenment.

109. "It is that all – pervading consciousness. It neither grows nor decays, because it is immutable. Rare is that ardent devotee of his Sadguru who understands his *Atman* to be such.

110. "Those who are always harrassed by the three-fold miseries – mental, physical and those that befall them due to destiny – cannot enjoy this experience, which is the privilege only of the Saints.

111. "Ignorance gives rise to material involvement. The only means to turn away from it is the state of oneness with *Brahman* and that is gained through the Saints.

112. "Be totally desireless and in the state of mind without any concrete subject or idea. It is the state, known as 'I am that Brahman'. Be totally absorbed in this idea till it becomes a natural disposition of your intellect.

113. "When one experiences that the Guru's words are like the scriptures; then both the inner and outer nature calm down and mental contentment will take place and one will be able to understand what *Atman* is.

114. "By which the mind sees a balanced nature of the world; there is non – attachment towards pleasures, wealth and materialistic things. It unravels the knot of ignorance which is within us and one will enter the realm of the Abstract.

115. "No doubt that the *Atman* is like a tiny particle floating in the ray of the sun shining through a chink in the window. Nay! It is smaller even than that. It is microscopic – smaller than an atom. That is certainly the conclusion.

116. "The *Atman* is larger than the biggest immense. But all this comparison is subjective because the *Atman* is beyond any unit of measure.

117. "If its minuteness, is considered it is microscopic and when its largeness is considered it is larger than the largest. Thus the size and shape is only for namesake. The *Atman* is complete in itself without any distinguishing property.

118. "The *Atman* is not born nor does it die. There is no root cause for it. It is unborn, permanent, everlasting, ancient and not easy to comprehend.

119. "That *Brahman* which can be seen in the representation of *AUM* – that is its entire nature. It is difficult to achieve even for *yogis* who have mastered reaching *samadhi* and coming out of it – then, can it be possible or accessible to all?!

120. "In the efforts to ascertain its nature, the Vedas were exhausted, the ascetics became forest dwellers, the Upanishads gave up – thus nobody was ever able to analyse and ascertain it.

121. "To acquire that self-realisation only a teacher who has attained oneness with God is capable. Others can have no footing. A person practising logic will not stand any chance.

122. "There is no chance only for a logician. He will only move round and round amidst delusions. His intellect will not come to rest without a teacher who is an expert in the sacred knowledge.

123. "The innumerable stars of one's own intellect and imaginations will not enable one to escape the eighty four lakh cycles of births and deaths. Only one moon, the teacher well-versed in the sacred knowledge is enough. When he is there, there will be no trace of darkness.

124. "That which is not acquired by many with a lot of efforts will be acquired easily if one clings fast to a *Sadguru* who spreads the light of good teaching.

125. "That false knowledge, which is motivated for the sake of fulfilment of desire, will disappear and truth, pure consciousness and bliss will stabilise. The state of self-realisation will arise. Its other name is liberation.

126. "This is what is desired deeply by living beings, for which they strive. All those who are always involved in the realisation of Self are forever looking inward.

127. "As soon as the mind wavers with respect to the Supreme Self all the passions and senses become active; but when the mind is steadfast in self-realisation then the passions weaken.

128. "He who has turned away from his Real Self, finds all material pleasures always confronting him; but if he turns to his Real Self, those same objects hold no attraction.

129. "He who desires only liberation and does not have any other wish within himself, and does not have the slightest craving for anything in this world or hereafter – such a person only is fit for liberation.

130. "One who falls short of even one of these qualities cannot be definitely called a seeker of liberation. He only pretends to be a seeker, like a squint-eyed person trying to pass off as a handsome man, or the blind in one eye pretending to see.

131. "Unless ego disappears, greed is destroyed, and the mind is devoid of passion, knowledge of *Brahman* will not be assimilated.

132. "The belief that the body is the soul is an illusion. Attachment is the cause of the bonds of the world. Renounce the senses completely and the concept that the pleasures spring from them. Then *Brahman* will be acquired.

133. "*Parabrahma* is without any special attributes, therefore it is difficult to realise. Thus it is explained with the help of examples. This is the only way that learned people follow for its attainment.

134. "The experts in the *Vedas* are aware that the soul is mysterious and omnipresent. But how can it be proved and experienced?

135. "The primary requirement is purity of mind. Next, penetrating and sharp intelligence is necessary. This leads to a three-fold purification – corporal, vocal and mental. And, in that state, overflowing with mercy, He Himself manifests.

136. "The *Atman* is eternal and immutable. Sorrow is absent from the life of the self-realised person, for that person is patient, wise and free forever from the bonds of the material world.

137. "A skillful, dialectical approach is of no avail. Mere understanding and study of the *Vedas*, *Shrutis* and the books and their analysis is of no use.

138. "The *Atman* is eternal and immutable. The body is perishable and malleable. Knowing this, he who works for self-improvement will be conscious of what is right and wrong conduct.

139. "A self-realised person is always fearless, the only unique one, who has obliterated the two-fold nature of the world and successfully destroys miseries.

140. "Though realisation of *Atman* is very difficult and cannot be understood by *kirtans* and discourses, and only intelligence can do nothing, but it is possible to understand by special means.

141. "One who is desireless in every walk of life and whose only goal is self-realisation, such a person who steadily hankers after the *Atman*, he alone can get the great benefit.

142. "One who has unwavering belief in "I AM THAT" and after hearing it, he makes it his one and only aim to experience it, is favoured by the *Atman*.

143. "A person who always indulges in evil deeds, is perturbed, unsteady, and whose mind is unable to concentrate – for such a person, though learned, it is impossible to acquire.

144. "He who discards that which is wrong, and practises that which is right, in accordance with the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, and whose mind is always in control, the *Atman* is at his command.

145. "He who keeps himself away from the sinful life, who humbles himself at the feet of the teacher and the Guru, who has given up the longing for the fruits of his action, can only attain the *Atman*.

146. "Without being desireless, and being only interested in the *Atman* and without giving up all passions, Self-realisation is unattainable.

147. "When the *Atman* witnesses the hardships undergone by seeker, it will on its own take pity and it will appear before the seeker. But this is not easy without a Guru.

148. "Therefore, for the sake of Self-realisation, the student should listen and meditate and bear in mind non-duality – then only will he easily achieve the *Atman*.

149. "This material world is full of ignorance. It is based and flourishes on ignorance. Understand that salvation is not possible without true knowledge.

150. "Analysis and inferences only deal with the words of the scriptures. When the materialistic attitude is destroyed then only true knowledge arises. Otherwise, it is not possible.

151. "He who considers a pious person or a sinner as the same, he who considers the soul residing in the body as God, and he who behaves accordingly, such a person is great and does not discriminate.

152. "When the realisation dawns that *Brahman* and the Soul are one, that is the ultimate goal of knowledge. Once this Self- realisation takes place, all ignorance vanishes.

153. "Once the Self Knowledge is complete, nothing more remains to be understood. It enables one to understand the material world as well as the palm of the hand. This is because of Self-realisation.

154. "The fruit of realisation is renunciation of the world, without hesitation. Immediate heavenly bliss is attained and he is replete with salvation.

155. "The *Atman* is subtler than the subtlest and greater than the greatest. By describing it thus, its all-pervasiveness makes it comprehensible to the intellect.

156. "Actually, it is neither subtle nor great. In its case any comparative

degree will look like imagination. It encompasses the whole - manifest, non-manifest, movable and immovable world.

157. "The Eternal Truth is indescribable. But to explain it to the intellect it is confined into words, though being itself unbound.

158. "Only by the means of brilliance of intellect, Supreme Truth cannot be comprehended. It is possible to achieve it by keeping company of Sages, *Sadgurus* and Saints and serving them with love.

159. "There is no dearth of descriptions of *Brahman*. Innumerable books and scriptures are filled with them. But, without the grace of a *Sadguru*, the understanding of it will elude one till eternity.

160. "Because of the lack of daily rituals and till such time the mind is not purified, and well-trained, the realisation of *Brahman* is not at all possible.

161. "Only *Brahman* is eternal. Everything else is transitory. Whatever is perceivable is not lasting. This is the truth, the truth, the truth.

162. "He who can speak on Brahman is rare; and even rarer is the pure-hearted listener. But finding a *Sadguru* who has experienced *Brahman*, and is loving, is rarer still.

163. "Is *Brahman* so easily attainable? Those who dwell in caves, and on the top of mountains, and who are caught in the web of yogic practises or are sitting in meditation,

164. "they even cannot succeed in finding *Brahman*, without the grace of a Guru. How can that be acquired by you, who are greed - personified?!

165. "He who has ungovernable love for money will never receive knowledge of *Brahman* till eternity. Bear this in mind.

166. "While engaged in listening to the sacred knowledge, if one constantly dwells upon the worldly pleasures and constantly thinks of the material world, then that person will get that kind of realisation only.

167. "Impurity, confusion and concealment are the three inherent flaws of the human mind. By means of selfless service, impurities can be cleansed and confusion can be removed through worship.

168. "When one performs one's duties and worships, the mind becomes mature as the impurities and confusions are removed. Only the veil remains.

169. "This is that veil which is the root cause of all catastrophe and is destroyed when true knowledge dawns, like the sunshine driving away darkness.

170. "Those well-versed in Vedas describe it with qualities such as truth, knowledge, eternal etc. That *Brahman* shines on its own when a person becomes realised.

171. "If a lone traveller is walking through the woods in the dim moonlight and sees a broken tree trunk stump he is scared and believes that it is a robber and hides, thinking,

172. "I am alone and carrying money. He is waiting to pounce on me like a foot-pad. Now what shall I do for my life is in danger'.

173. "But at that time a light draws near and he knows the truth. His fright disappears and the misgiving about the robber is removed.

174. Be it so. Now I have told the listeners the difficulties in attaining (the *Brahman*). The next chapter will deal with how the permanent good appears before the seeker.

175. Hemad surrenders willfully at the feet of Sai, and has spoken incoherently whatever has come to his mind. Let the devoted and innocent ones listen to that prattling which comes to life because of Sai's Grace.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the sixteenth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Narration of the Knowledge of *Brahman*".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. *Chaturai* was Baba's favourite word and he told his devotees often: "There is no use of *Chaturai*. You should always listen to what the elders and the wise people tell you".
2. The jewel which grants a desired object.
3. A tree which fulfils all wishes.
4. State of samadhi or complete peace.
5. The cow that fulfils all desires.
6. Indra.
7. A Marwari shopkeeper of Shirdi.
8. A Bania grocer of Shirdi.
9. Whether he should give or not give; etc. were his doubts.
10. *Nirgun Brahman*.
11. *Sagun Brahman*.
12. Research, Study effort.

17

The Narration of the Knowledge of *Brahman*

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. In the last chapter, I had mentioned that in this chapter will be described the qualities of Permanent Good (*Shreya*) and the Pleasant (*Praya*). Listen to it with respect.
2. "As light and darkness are inter-related to each other, still they are separate from each other, the Good and the Pleasant are similar to them.
3. One whose mind runs after the Pleasant, he deteriorates because of selfishness. The Good is restraint and the Pleasant is that which is without restraint.
4. The Good deals with pure knowledge only and the Pleasant is false knowledge. Wise men are never attracted towards the Pleasant; but the Good is disliked by the ignorant.
5. Till such time that wealth and women are available, the senses indulge in pleasures and no thought is given to self-denial or non attachment. The Pleasant is welcome.
6. The Good and the Pleasant are inter-mixed like water and milk. But the Swans of Manas lake drink only the milk.
7. Similarly, those steadfast by nature, wise, self-controlled and fortunate ones only hanker for the Good and shun the Pleasant.
8. But look at those dullards who are only keen about caring for their body, cattle, children, wealth, status and well-being! They acquire the Pleasant only.
9. Whether it be the Good or the Pleasant, even if both are understood in the right way, it is difficult to bring the Good into practice, even for a person who is independent in his thinking.
10. However, if both are available, it is difficult to select, and if ignorance

wins over discrimination, then the Pleasant comes and embraces one.

11. In setting aside the Pleasant and accepting the Good is the real spiritual endeavour, just as the Swan separates the milk from the mixture of milk and water.

12. The Good and the Pleasant are both attainable by a person. But those dullards without self-control are incapable of discrimination.

13. Initially, one should definitely be able to understand wherein lies the Good. Afterwards if there are obstacles in the way, one would be able to avoid them entirely.

14. At this point, the human efforts to attain the four well-known goals of life[1] intervene and make their claims. But one must fight for the sake of the Good and make intense efforts.

15. Inconceivable are the whirlpools of the mundane existence which rotate incessantly, twenty-four hours of the day. Man suffers the harsh miseries of the three-fold tribulations[2].

16. Because of them (whirlpools of mundane existence), extreme miseries befall and man is harassed or tormented. Then he tries to discover easy means of pleasure to avoid them.

17. The whirlpool of mundane existence is unbearable. How can it be stopped? Could there be a means to do so? He starts thinking thus.

18. With good luck, when these thoughts are born they motivate the goals of life. Then for the sake of his own good, he follows the right path.

19. False knowledge or illusion are existing from the very beginning. They are like the futile illusions created by the silver of the oster shell and water of the mirage. They should be considered as erroneous conceptions and obstacles and, therefore, should be removed.

20. In a dream, if innumerable hail stones of gold shower and are collected with effort, thinking that they will prove useful in time of need, they disappear on awakening.

21. Knowingly and unknowingly, fate, destiny, passion, hope, desire or covetousness are always the obstacles – remember this! and uproot them at the outset.

22. That which even sunlight cannot penetrate, and from which the intellect returns defeated, and where the Vedas and *Shrutis* cannot get a foothold, the Guru leads you to it.

23. Passion and anger, these are the two emotions, which come in the

way of true knowledge. They shatter the power of understanding, concentration and *samadhi* very skillfully.

24. If a flame and camphor come close together, is it possible for them to push away from each other? No sooner than they come together, the camphor starts burning due to the flame.
25. What is the use of such a person who is continuously wallowing in sin and in acts forbidden by the scriptures, even though he is a scholar, because he does not know what is right and what is wrong?
26. Similarly, that person who is always restless, perturbed from within, driven crazy by being caught in the clutches of the senses, cannot attain wisdom.
27. He, who is contented, calm and constant in his search for his True Self, and above all, obedient to his Guru is full of wisdom.
28. Whether he be a householder or a *Rishi*, if he knows his destination he should be the master of the chariot of his body. What is the use of a pedant?
29. There is no scope for just blabbering. Only learning is the essence. Oh, you! regard your body as a chariot and then sit still in it.
30. In the chariot of one's own body, make your intellect the charioteer and be the master yourself. Then you can sit at ease.
31. On these roads full of obstacles, in the form of pleasures of the senses, make the charioteer control the ten prancing horses of the sense organs by means of the reins, in the form of the mind.
32. If the horses try to run helter-skelter, the charioteer will hold the reins to control the horses. And once they are entrusted to him, you can rest at ease.
33. If the charioteer is skillful and expert, the horses will run properly. But if the mind in control of the reins is not independent, there is weakness.
34. Whenever the intellect accompanied by the sense of discretion, is in a position to guide the chariot, that person has full control over himself. One who can concentrate and whose mind is composed only can reach the supreme state of salvation and all others tire out on the way.
35. He will not be satisfied whose mind is restless. He has no entry in the realm of the supreme state of salvation and thus cannot avoid the cycle of birth and death.
36. Such is that supreme state but when can one find it? When all the doubts of the mind are cleared, it then appears before you on its own.

37. Here logic, deductions, popular talk or discussions are of no avail. Only by God's grace you can attain it. All other sciences of learning are futile.

38. This is the marvel in this case – that innocent belief succeeds in knowing it, while logical skills are futile and the logical mind is confused.

39. Those who acquire the perfect wisdom are of a different type, whose thinking and intelligence are of a different kind. Please understand that such a person who has the real knowledge is very different and he is the best person to impart knowledge.

40. How the precious body is wasted! Wealth and pleasures are like the afternoon shadows, short-lived. Understand that this is a powerful illusion created by God and surrender at the feet of the Saints.

41. Saints are like the vessel on the oceans of the world. You be one of the passengers. Who else is capable of taking you across to the yonder shore?

42. Self-control and detachment, if combined together, will take him across the worldly ocean without difficulty, even though he may be a dullard like a millstone.

43. The Lord has six divine perfections or attributes[3]. Detachment is the first and foremost. Those who are extremely fortunate, they only obtain it and others do not.

44. Unless the duties as fixed by the *Shastras* are performed, the mind cannot be purified. Till the mind is not purified, know that true knowledge is not possible.

45. Know, therefore, that only performance of your duty is the root cause for gaining knowledge. Fulfilment of the daily duties, occasional duties and those prescribed by the scriptures will cleanse the impurities of your mind.

46. In this way, in that purified mind, self-control and detachment take place; and also control of breath and body etc.[4], which are the means of procuring that wealth, are at your disposal. Finally, with their help, one can be free of body while living in it.

47. He who discards the fruits of action and expectations with the help of full concentration of mind and surrenders to a Guru wholeheartedly, then the Guru accepts him.

48. He who has given up the pleasures of the world, who is a devoted follower, who has full faith and who has become wise due to the knowledge he has acquired, even to him there is no other way.

49. Even after that knowledge is obtained, if he does not behave in the

right fashion, he will be neither here nor there, neither on heaven nor earth – he will be suspended in between like a *Trishanku*.

50. The ignorance of the person is the cause of the very materialistic attitude. When there is the knowledge of the self in its true sense, it will lead to the state of detachment towards the material world on its own.

51. A person who is self realised is always devoid of ego. For him the worldly concepts of right and wrong, pious and ominous, good and bad are of no consequence.

52. In one, whose pride of material achievements disappear, detachment takes its place immediately – and that in itself is the ultimate state of being. Remember this perfectly well.

53. In the natural course of existence, there are friends and foes. But in the case of detachment it all seems foolish, because when one sees ME in all, how can there be friendship or enemity?

54. In comparison to the supreme happiness even extreme bodily agony seems insignificant. In such a case, therefore, who can crave for worldly happiness if one has acquired the supreme happiness?

55. Even though mountains of worldly miseries befall him, he will not be perturbed even in the least bit and will be firm like a rock of courage.

56. God gives the gift of detachment to him whom He chooses to bless. Then He couples it with the sense of discrimination and makes him cross the worldly ocean.

57. For the seeker of the Self, desirous of beholding his true Self as clearly as his reflection in the mirror, there is no other place except this world or the heavens. There is no third place for him.

58. If rituals and sacrifices are performed, the deities are pleased and they grant residence after death in the heavens. One may get the fruits of the actions but one cannot obtain the wealth of self-knowledge.

59. It is true that after great many austerities one becomes a *Gandharva* [5], but the knowledge of the soul is very obscure. Therefore, those who are desirous of the true knowledge of the soul will opt for a long life on the earth.

60. Here the mind is purified; the intellect becomes clear like a mirror; and the purest form of knowledge of the self, which is threefold purification (mind, intellect and *atma*) is reflected.

61. In the other place, which is the heavens, it is possible to get the knowledge of the self but it is very difficult and it requires tremendous efforts to reach it.

62. Illusion entwines you like a serpent; and, as it were, completely squeezes the intestines. The illusion also embraces outwardly – who can be capable of avoiding it?
63. "You have been watching us while sitting here. You possess fifty times more money (than rupees five) in your pocket. Take it out now. Let us see. Confusion[6] is in your pocket".
64. When asked to take it out, the gentleman put his hand in his pocket and took out a packet, which consisted of twenty-five notes of rupees ten each and counted them.
65. The gentleman was ashamed in his heart of hearts and thought to himself: 'How well Maharaj knows the inner secrets!' He put his head at his feet and anxiously asked for his blessings.
66. "Then Baba said at that time: "Now wrap up your fake *Brahman*. Till your greed is not destroyed, you will never realise *Brahman*."
67. "He whose mind is attached to his family and possessions (sons, farm, animals etc.) how can he achieve *Brahman* till constant awareness of his wealth is not abandoned.
68. "The greed for money is very difficult. It is a deep whirlpool of pain, full of crocodiles in the form of conceit and jealousy. Only a desireless person can swim across these difficult waters.
69. "There is unending enmity between avarice and *Brahman*. How can he attain salvation and practise self–denial who has no time for meditation? A covetous man is a fallen man.
70. "Where there is greed, there is no peace, no contentment, nor restfulness. All means (of achieving *Brahman*) turn to dust when avarice takes hold of the mind.
71. "He who indulges in low, forbidden acts and stoops down to lowest behaviour, unacceptable to the *Shrutis* and the *Smritis*, and who is permanently leading that kind of life, can never have equanimity of mind.
72. "Such a man is called whimsical. He is always engaged in wicked deeds, permanently wallowing in worldly pleasures and he never understands what is good or bad.
73. "May be he has understood the nature of *Brahman* but if he is not detached from the fruits of his action, then his knowledge of the *Brahman* is futile and he is not self-realised.
74. "If anybody approaches a Saint and asks for anything, a Saint first judges whether he is worthy of it and then grants him his desire accordingly.
75. "One whose mind is engaged day and night in boasting about

material achievements and seeking pleasures, for such a person the preachings of a Guru are of no use. For both, it is a sheer waste of time!

76. "He who tries to penetrate the realm of divine life without the purification of his mind, his efforts appear like an exhibition of scholarship. It is all a futile effort.

77. "Therefore, one should speak only what one understands; and should eat what one can digest otherwise unnecessarily there will be indigestion. Everybody knows this.

78. "My treasury is full, I can give anything anyone asks for but I have to take into account the receiver's capacity. I give that which one is able to receive only.

79. "If you heed all that I have said, you will be benefitted. Sitting as I do in this holy *Masjid*, I never utter an untruth".

80. When one takes a dip with full faith in the river of the nectar of the words of Saints, one is purified both inwardly and outwardly and all the impurities are washed away.

81. Such is the greatness of Sainath, which when I try to describe there is no end! How can I compare him, who is incomparable? He is reached through pure love.

82. He is a mother to all – refuge of all the helpless and fatigued, the support of those dependent on him, as is a tree to a creeper. He also gives a cool shade to those who are poor and helpless.

83. There are many Saints who have given up the world. They keep silent, living in mountain caverns in solitude, and only care for their own permanent good.

84. Of what use are such Saints who are only interested in their own good or only their own spiritual advancement?

85. But Sai Baba was not that kind of a Saint. Though he had no relatives, friends, home, wife or son, he continued to dwell in the world.

86. He accepted negligible quantity of alms from five households and lived under a tree, night and day. Setting up his scanty possessions, he taught the ways of life.

87. Such great Saints are rare in this world who after attaining Self realisation strive for the good of the people.

88. Blessed is that country, blessed that family, blessed those pious parents, blessed that holy womb that gave birth to this gem.

89. Without efforts, this *Parees* [7] was found, but it was regarded as a

mere stone and discarded by many. In Shirdi, this great divinity was not recognised for a long time by anybody.

90. It is like a gem falling in a heap of garbage, which urchins discover, play about with it freely and step on it, assuming it to be a stone.

91. Be it so. In this way, that seeker of *Brahman* was satisfied after receiving his blessings. It is the same case with all of us. We should give up this hard path.

92. As long as we enjoy outer pleasures like listening to sweet music, enjoying a soft touch, sweet fragrance and pleasing sights, there cannot be a control over the senses.

93. Unless the senses are under control and their very nature changes and turns within, the understanding of *Brahman* and experiencing it are impossible.

94. Initially one should be completely desireless[8]. Then one should surrender totally to a Guru. In this way, he who develops firm and full faith deserves the knowledge of the *Atman*.

95. When the five sense organs, like the ears etc, abandon their respective pleasures, then the mind will give up doubts and desires.

96. Thus, disregarding the difference and being free internally, the intellect will be relieved of its burden of taking decisions. That itself is the supreme state of mind and the unchangeable *Brahman* is also the same.

97. When the intellect will not need the help of the sense of discretion, the mind will come alive. That is Pure Consciousness and nothing else. Blessed is the man who can gain it.

98. When the sense organs turn away from worldly pleasures and are introverted, Bliss of Self is experienced and everything else will mean unhappiness.

99. It is camouflaged by the senses and passions. It is extremely minute. Thus this knowledge of *Atman* is difficult to perceive. It is the means of supreme happiness. It is very mysterious in nature and unintelligible.

100. He who is unconcerned about the present world and the other world till he reaches the stage of *Hiranyagarbha* [9], know that he alone is emancipated and he only is annointed with *Brahmanpada*[10].

101. The mind should be slowly and gradually turned back from sense objects and should be made to concentrate on the *Atman*. Knowledge of the *Atman* will thus be acquired.

102. Disinterested in the fruits of action in the present world and the

other world, and unconcerned over the duality of happiness and unhappiness, only the intelligent people enjoy the divine experience.

103. Who can be happy in the torturous waters of the worldly ocean, engulfed by the flames of the fire of *Vadranal* [11] and the three-fold miseries[12].

104. Therefore, for the sake of one's own upliftment, one should attain Sai's blessings. Read his stories, listen and meditate on them.

105. If you listen to this biography of Sainath, in the company of wife, son, family, friends and relatives, you will get the benefits of both the worlds. Baba's *leelas* are unique.

106. Only the fortunate and faithful listeners are able to listen to these stories. While listening, a feeling of lightness steals through them and leads to an all encompassing peace.

107. In the running waters of the stream of the life stories, the salt of actions and non-actions will dissolve and Sai's beautiful image will appear before the eyes, through listening.

108. By listening to his life story, sins will be destroyed. By listening to his life story, destiny will be fought. By listening to his life story, supreme happiness will be achieved effortlessly by the listeners.

109. By listening, the heart will become pure; by listening the cycle of birth and death will be avoided; by listening the listeners will achieve *Brahman*, which can be achieved by performing actions and offering the fruits to *Brahman*.

110. Such a person who desires to serve Sai, Sai will make him desireless and Sairama will give rest, peace and happiness to his own devotee.

111. Oh, listeners please read, listen, study or meditate on this book, part by part, daily or learn it or recite it.

112. 'Know thyself perfectly well. That happiness is *Brahman*'; is the famous quotation from the *Taittirya Upanishad*. This is transcripted to the devotees by Baba, who was well-versed in the *Shrutis*.

113. "Do not worry in the least. Remain always cheerful. Do not have any anxieties until death." Baba always preached this.

114. This chapter may deal with the explanation about *Brahman*; but the implication is that he who surrenders to Sai, his ship will be able to cross the worldly ocean.

115. One should give advice for the good of the people repeatedly and should oblige others. This motto, Baba followed and behaved accordingly.

116. Whether this is right or wrong, these arguments are subjective. In this book, the happiness of common people is stressed upon.

117. This is the purpose behind this book. Baba knows the cause and effect. Just as he knows the people's aspirations, he also knows their future.

118. Listen to the stories from the mouth of the Guru, experience his incomprehensible powers, try to retain and memorise as many stories as possible and also tell others.

119. If this beautiful life story of Sai is listened to with great respect, the sorrows and difficulties of the narrator and the listener will be destroyed and will bring to an end the days of suffering of all.

120. Experiencing his divine powers, who cannot be surprised, except the unfortunate one? His mere *darshan* calmed the beholders, making them bow at his feet.

121. Listen with full understanding and implications to the lucid stories of Sai. If such an opportunity of happiness is there who will miss it?

122. In the stormy waters of hope, there are whirlpools of son, wife and friends; crocodiles of passion, rage etc., and sharks[13] in the form of various diseases.

123. At some times there is a temporary aversion for hours together. There is a mental conflict, an eruption; but the bond cannot be broken.

124. You should teach your own mind that you are yourself the pure *Brahman*, but you are bound to the body like a parrot[14], clinging to the bar which goes around rotating.

125. You have been lured away by illusions and temptations. Therefore, you have forgotten your own true self. Be aware and realise your real nature immediately.

126. Delusion creates more delusion; and thus the illusion about bodily pride takes place. Try to understand that the concept of 'I and Mine' is like a mirage. Therefore, why don't you become detached?

127. Oh, you! Think well, whether you should get entangled in this notion of 'I and Mine' in this worldly existence. Oh, parrot! leave the bar and fly high above in the sky.

128. Where there is liberty there is bondage; and bondage is accompanied by liberty. Ignoring both these conditions, you should live in the purest spirit within you.

129. This is subjective knowledge. Happiness and misery is total ignorance. Therefore, abandon that knowledge and acquire true knowledge, which is the knowledge of the *Brahman*, and which is within you.

130. As long as the discrimination between 'You and me' exists, it is not possible to perceive your own good. Give it up and then look at yourself by throwing away selfishness.

131. If a person as wealthy as *Kuber* [15], outwardly leads the life of a mendicant, he is not doing the right thing. It is a hypocritical behaviour and all due to false knowledge.

132. Regularly listen to the best of the scriptures; follow the advice of the Guru with faith; be always alert and lead a regulated life.

133. Those who follow this principle automatically follow the path leading to their salvation. Innumerable beings are thus liberated very naturally.

134. He, who constantly thinks, day and night, as to when he will be free of the bonds of this world, will be able to cut off this bond.

135. Securing as much solitude as one can, and bearing in mind that the worldly existence is ephemeral, one should always be engaged in studying and understanding the meaning of the *Atman*.

136. With mind full of devotion and faith, a disciple should completely and humbly surrender. Till such time, the Guru will not give the treasure of knowledge to him.

137. Serve the Guru with your whole being. Think of salvation and bondage, ponder upon the question of true knowledge and ignorance and leave the success only to the Guru.

138. Nobody else but a Guru can tell about the *Atman* and the Supreme Self. Guru also does not give even a particle of knowledge unless one surrenders completely.

139. If anyone else excepting the Guru imparts knowledge it will not be able to liberate you from the world; neither will it at all be possible of leading to the fruits of *Moksha* nor will it ever have the full impact on your mind.

140. Therefore, knowledge is not possible to be obtained without a Guru. All the learned men are aware of this that the capable feet of the Guru can solve the mystery of the *Brahman* and the *Atman*.

141. Without any hesitation give up your ego and pride, and prostrate yourself, bowing your head down at the feet of the Guru.

142. 'I am your humblest servant. I have always regarded your feet as my only solace'. Utter these words. Gather courage and have faith in him.

143. Then you should see his miracle. The Ocean of Mercy, in the form of the Guru, will be moved and will take you aloft, swaying you lightly on the waves of kindness.

144. He will keep his hand of re-assurance on your head; will ward off bad omens; burn up heaps of all sins and annoint the forehead with *udi*.
145. This discourse about the meaning of *Brahman* to the seeker of *Brahman* was incidental. He gave the complete essence of the knowledge of oneness of *Jiva* and Shiva[16] to all his devotees.
146. What need could Maharaj have, with his immeasurable wisdom and profound learning, to indulge in humour and cut jokes?
147. Such a doubt may arise. But, if you think carefully, there is only one satisfactory explanation. Listen attentively.
148. When you are amongst young children, talking with them, enjoying their lisping prattle, does serious talk ever take place?
149. Is there no love for them? On the contrary, ordinary words will not be able to describe that love. But, light talk and humour are the skillful ways of teaching.
150. Does a child know what is the hidden ailment which is troubling him? The mother only has to give him the necessary medicine and forcibly, if he obstinately refuses it;
151. sometimes by coaxing, at times by glaring with angry eyes, at times by beating, and also sometimes with a loving embrace.
152. When the children mature one likes to dote on them. But the knowledge given to them has to be adjusted in accordance with the sharp or dull intelligence.
153. A sharp intellect can grasp quickly. Not even a second is needed to understand and assimilate the teachings. In the case of a dullard it is quite different. It takes a lot of efforts for him to understand and retain.
154. Sai *Samartha* was the store of knowledge. He imparts the wealth of knowledge according to the intelligence of the devotee and first decides about his capability and purity.
155. He was intuitive and at the outset itself he knew everybody in their entirety. He decided on the right means of teaching and the right kind of discipline in accordance with the capability.
156. Whatever a person deserves he decides before hand and works according to his capacity. Baba carries responsibilities of such persons on himself.
157. Similarly, though we look old and respectable, before that *Siddha* Sai we are like children behaving childlishly, always keen on enjoying humour.
158. Baba had an abundance of jokes. He leaves his devotees free of worry by offering that knowledge for which the devotee has a worry.

159. A person may be intelligent or a dullard. If he reads this, he would feel great joy. Listening to it, he will wish to listen to it more and more. Meditating on it, it will give contentment and bliss.

160. If a person recites it over and over again, its divine meaning will manifest itself. If he tries to meditate on it every day, he will have great pleasure and permanent happiness, without obstacles. Such is his unfathomable *leela*!

161. Luckily whoever has had a little experience of this, his body, speech and mind will become inseparably attached to Baba. Such is his inconceivable *leela*!

162. Hemad surrenders at the feet of Sai. One way of doing good to a devotee is to impart knowledge by use of humour. The seeker of *Brahman* was just an instrument.

163. The next chapter is even more absorbing than this. It will fulfil the wishes of the listeners. The secret desire of my heart was fulfilled, with lucid explanation.

164. How I approached Madhav, how I gave him Baba's message and how I received his blessings. Listen to all that from the beginning to the end.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the seventeenth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called: 'The Narration of the Knowledge of *Brahman*'.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, *Moksha*.
2. Corporal, Mental and Destined.
3. Glory, Wealth, Generosity, Fame, Knowledge and Detachment.
4. *Sham*, *dama*, *tapa*, *titiksha*, *shradha* and *samadhan*.
5. Celestial chorister.
6. A pun is made on the word Brahma, in Marathi.
7. A stone which can turn iron into gold.
8. Give up desire for wealth, progeny and fame.
9. Last stage of *Yogic Samadhi*.
10. The station of *Brahman* as attained by the austerities.
11. Fire under the ocean.
12. *Adhidaivik*, *adhyatmik* and *adhibhautik*.
13. Actually, a huge imaginary fish called Timingil is mentioned.
14. Bird-catchers use a device for catching the parrots, which begins to rotate as soon as the parrot sits on the bar. The parrot clings desperately to the bar in

the false notion that this way he will be secure. If he lets go, he could fly away. But he hangs on and is caught.

15. Treasurer of the heavens.
16. The *Atman* and the Supreme Self.

Shri Sai Baba

(This portrait was sent by Baba
to Saddu Bhayya on 8.02.1915)

18

Grace that was Bestowed on Me

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Hail to the *Sadguru* who is supreme and eternal! Hail to the *Sadguru*, who is the Truth of *Brahman* ! who makes you experience that the world is illusory. Hail, hail to him, who is the Controller of *Maya*!
2. Hail, hail to you without beginning or end! Hail, hail to you, beyond duality! Hail, hail to you, who is immutable! O, you are the only one, who teaches the true nature of the Self!
3. Can a salt doll return from a bath in the ocean? This can never happen! It is the same with you!
4. The *Vedas* and the *Shrutis* discuss, day and night, that which cannot be defined. You can point it out easily to the devotees.
5. If, by luck, you lay seige to someone then that one will never entertain the selfish thoughts of the difference between yours and mine.
6. In the last chapter, the pure story unfolding the meaning of *Brahman* and how the avariciousness of the *Brahmarthi* was an obstacle was described.
7. Now the story about how I received Baba's blessings. Oh listeners, listen respectfully for it will reveal Baba's way of giving guidance.
8. This story is also interesting. I will relate it as it happened. Listeners should listen, with a calm mind, for their own good.
9. If the listener is keen and has due respect, the speaker also gets the right enthusiasm and his heart overflows with love. It is enjoyable for both of them.
10. Without any change of mind or feeling, even in the slightest measure, and according to each one's capabilities, Baba showed the true path and preached in accordance with that.

11. Many people are of the opinion that whatever a Guru has told them should not be divulged to anybody, otherwise the Guru's words become ineffective.

12. But this is entirely imaginary – an unnecessary fuss made. Not only things taught personally, but dream visions too, have been told to all, word for word.

13. If you assume this to be untrue, I can support it with the example of Budha Kaushik Rishi, who was taught the *Ram Raksha Stotra*[1] in his dream, which he taught to all.

14. The Guru is like a moisture laden cloud of the rainy season, who fondly showers water in the form of contentment. Why should it be hoarded? On the contrary, one should drink to one's heart's content and should also serve others.

15. A mother holds the chin of the child and lovingly feeds medicine for the sake of its health. Baba's skill was similar.

16. His ways were not secretive. Listen carefully how unexpectedly he would fulfil the wishes of his devotees.

17. Blessed, blessed is the company of the *Sadguru*! Who can describe his powers? When the memories of his words are recalled, one by one, I am inspired greatly.

18. If you pray to God with love, and serve the Guru and perform his *puja*, you will receive that knowledge which only the Guru has. All other means are useless.

19. This path of the world is full of confusion and dim. The words of the Guru shine like rays from a lamp to make it smooth and perceivable.

20. Guru is actually God himself. He is *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Maheshwar*. Guru in reality is God Almighty. Guru is the Supreme *Brahman*.

21. Guru is the mother and Guru is the father. Guru is the protector when God's wrath is incurred. But when Guru is angry nobody can protect you. Remember this always.

22. Guru is the guide for worldly behaviour, the rituals and pilgrimages to holy places. He is the guide to what is right and wrong, and to practise non-attachment. He is the exponent of the *Vedas* and the 'Upanishads'.

23. The Saints open up the inner eyes of the intellect and reveal the grandeur of the Inner Self. They fulfil all the wishes of the devotees. They are extremely tender at heart and compassionate.

24. They cause the passions to disappear. Even in sleep true knowledge

pulsates. Because of their blessings, the twin fruits of self-denial and self-control are obtained.

25. If one is able to get close to a Saint, serve him and love him, like the wish-fulfilling tree, he fulfils all the wishes of the devotees and wards off all miseries.

26. Always practise truth; listen to the stories about the saints; bow down at the feet of the Saints. Sins will be washed away.

27. When Lord Reay was the Governor of the State, he overthrew the Crawford regime. At that time, a well-known gentleman became Baba's devotee.

28. This world is full of three-fold miseries and is false. This gentleman suffered heavy losses in business and was disheartened. He gave up everything and left home.

29. He was greatly perturbed. He decided to take a journey to a far off place where he would be happy in seclusion.

30. When a person is in tremendous difficulty, then he remembers God; and that too, with great difficulty. Then the devotee continuously calls out God's name and becomes a follower.

31. But till the sins are not diminished, just reciting God's name does not help. Afterwards, seeing the devotion, God leads him to a Saint.

32. Similarly it happened for that devotee. Seeing him utterly fed up of the world, his friends gave him good advice. Listen to that.

33. "Why don't you go to Shirdi to take the *darshan* of *Samartha* Sainath? Pray to him, the Saint who is the Cloud of Mercy.

34. "If one is able to get the company of a Saint, even for a moment, the wayward mind becomes steady and immediately settles at the feet of God from where it is difficult to turn back.

35. "People go from far and near, humble themselves in the dust of Sai's feet, act according to *Maharaj's* commands and get their wishes fulfilled by serving him.

36. "Such is his wide-spread fame. The young and the old all know about it. If he takes pity on you, you will be free of miseries.

37. "Shirdi, at present, is a holy place. Streams of people flow in and out, day and night. You too can have this experience. The *darshan* of the Saint will be beneficial".

38. Just as a person worried because of drought and thus reduced to penury, if he is suddenly showered with ample wealth; or if a person agonised by terrible hunger is served with delicacies;

39. he felt like that when his friends told him of Shirdi. That devotee

accepted this advice and decided to have the experience. He set off for Shirdi.

40. He came to the town, had *darshan* and prostrated at Sai's feet. Immediately, he felt relaxed and contented.

41. He who was Absolute *Brahman*, Ancient, Self-illumined, Unblemished – such was the vision he saw and he was joyous.

42. He felt that, thanks to his last birth's good fortune, he had come near Sai's feet and his mind was at peace, free from anxiety because of the *darshan*.

43. This person's surname was Sathe. He was of a steadfast nature. He began the recitation of the 'Guru Charitra'[2] and practised the ritual religiously.

44. After seven days of reading the book was over, Baba gave him a dream vision that night in which he was holding the book in his hand and was explaining its meaning to Sathe.

45. Baba sat on his own seat, made Sathe sit in front of him, took the 'Guru Charitra' book and expertly explained it to him.

46. Baba recited from the book and taught like a *puranika*[3]. Sathe listened peacefully and full of respect.

47. 'What is this about-turn in my life?!' Thought Sathe. He felt greatly surprised and was choked with love.

48. 'O, Benevolent One, you awaken those who are resting their heads on the pillows of the darkness of ignorance and who are snoring away in the embrace of passions!

49. Just see, even at such a time, shaking us to wakefulness, you are giving the nectar of the 'Guru Charitra' to drink, O Merciful One'.

50. So be it. After he had such a dream Sathe became fully awake immediately. He related the whole episode which had taken place to Kakasaheb Dixit.

Hari Sitaram Dikshit aliias Kakasaheb Dikshit

51. And said: "I do not understand the meaning. Only Baba is capable of knowing it. I do not know what is in his mind. Kaka, please ask him in detail.

52. "Shall I start the recitation again? Or, shall I consider that whatever has been done is enough? Whatever be Baba's intentions, please ask him. Only that will put my mind to rest".

53. Then, Kaka having found an opportune moment told Baba about the dream. "Oh, Lord, through this dream what have you to convey to Sathe?

54. "Should the week-long recitation be repeated? Or should it be

terminated now? Please explain the meaning of the dream yourself and show the way to Sathe.

55. "This is the only request I am making at your feet. Sathe is an ardent devotee. Please have mercy on him and grant his wish".

56. Then Baba ordered: "Let there be more recitation. By reading this 'Guru Charitra', devotees are purified.

57. "If this book is recited repeatedly, it will be beneficial for them. They will receive God's blessings and the worldly chains will be broken off".

58. While Baba was thus talking, I was massaging Baba's feet. I was surprised inwardly and was provoked to think.

59. 'How could Baba do this?! It seems that Sathe has gained the fruit with little effort. And I have spent years! While he gets the benefit in seven days!

60. 'Sathe has only once completed the recitation of the 'Guru Charitra' in seven days and here I am who has done it for forty years! Do I deserve no thought?

61. 'One gets the benefits within seven days and another has spent seven fruitless years[4]! I am like the chatak eagerly awaiting and thinking, when will this merciful cloud shower on me?

62. 'When will that day ever come when this jewel amongst the Saints blesses me, fulfils my heart's desire and will grant me the knowledge?'

63. Sree Guru Sai loved his devotees. See his marvel! No sooner than these thoughts came to my mind that he immediately was aware of them!

64. Such thoughts, good or bad, though born of illusion, may they be millions of them, which arise and subside continuously, all come to his knowledge.

65. 'The mind can imagine that which even an enemy cannot think of ', is a well-known saying. Though nobody else would know the thoughts, Maharaj immediately realised them.

66. But that very compassionate Mother forgives everything that is evil; and, at the opportune moment, she provokes the good and cultivates right behaviour.

67. Then having understood my thoughts, Baba said to me: "Get up. Go to Shamya and bring Rs. 15/- from him.

68. Sit with him for a while; chat with him; come back quickly after taking *dakshina* from him".

69. Sainath took pity on me and under the pretext of *dakshina*, said: "Go and immediately ask for money from Shama for my sake".

70. When such an order was given, who could dare to sit? If one should sit in spite of that, it would be disobedience. I got up and took leave.

71. Then I left immediately. Shamrao came out to greet. He had just had his bath and was standing there, wearing a *dhoti*.

72. He had just finished his bath, had put on freshly – laundered garments and was draping the folds of the *dhoti*, while reciting God's names, under his breath.

73. He said: "How have you come unexpectedly? Are you coming from the *Masjid*? Why do you look restless? And, why are you alone to-day?

74. "Come and sit. I have just had a bath and am pleating my dhoti. I'll just pour the water over the images of the deities and will return in no time.

75. "By the time you eat pan, I will finish my *puja* and rituals. Afterwards we will sit comfortably and talk at leisure".

76. Madhavrao went inside. Then I casually picked up the book of 'Nath Bhagvat'[5], which was lying on the window-sill.

77. I opened the book at random and strangely it was that page which I had started to read in the morning and had left incomplete.

78. I was greatly surprised because the portion I was reading in the morning and which I had omitted due to sheer laziness, Baba made me complete and made me stick to my daily ritual.

79. 'Ritual' means to read a certain portion regularly. If not fully understood or done half-way, one should not get up and leave it unfinished. Otherwise, the *upasana* is incomplete.

80. Now, this small story, which has come up in the course of narration, I do not like to leave. So, now, listeners should listen to that story, with respect regarding the 'Nath Bhagvat'.

81. That is the 'Nath Bhagvat', full of devotions to the Guru, which Sai has acknowledged, and which Dixit read regularly.

82. This book, written for the salvation of the world was told to Brahma (the Creator) by Narayana (Vishnu) and was the seed sowed by him in the field, which Narada reaped.

83. That farm was cultivated in ten fold ways by Badrayan[6] and Shuka[7] selected a few best ears of the corn for the sake of Parikshit[8], in his threshing ground (in the scuttle).

84. Sridhar Swamy[9] cleaned it. Janardan Swamy measured it and Eknath prepared plenty of delicious dishes from it.

85. The eleventh chapter, which is the mine of devotion, love and happiness, from the *Vrindavan*[11], with thirty-two corners, is the chapter which Dixit read regularly.

86. During the day he would read and explain that (to the other devotees); and at night he would read 'Bhavartha Ramayan'[12]. This book was also ordered by the Guru and Dixit followed that authority.

87. 'Nath Bhagvat' is the essence of happiness and devotion to God – a second edition, as it were, of the 'Dñyaneshwari'. This is a great obligation on Maharashtra by Nath.

88. Having an early morning bath, doing daily worship of Sai and other deities, offering *naivedya* and having done the *arati* (lighting the niranjan),

89. then, afterwards along with other listeners, having taken the naivedya of milk and some fruits, he read the *pothi* at full length, full of respect, as a daily ritual.

90. That *pothi*, which was enjoyed by the great devotee of God, Tukaram, and was recited by him a thousand times in solitude on the Bandara hill, how can its sweetness be possibly described by anybody?

91. Sai Samartha had asked Dixit who was a devotee full of faith to read the divine book, which is beneficient and capable of leading beings to their salvation.

92. One need not go and stay in the jungles because God himself appears in the *Uddhava Gita* (chapter 11). Those who recite it with full faith can reach God directly.

93. In 'Mahabharata', there is a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna; but this one between Krishna and Uddhava is better than that. It is that which is in the 'Bhagvat' brought out in words by Eknath, with fond understanding.

94. So be it. This beneficent book, together with the 'Bhavartha Dipika', of Dñyandev, the great and merciful Sainath made people read in Shirdi.

95. Sakharam Hari Jog was commissioned by Baba ro read it at Sathe's wada and the devotees were greatly benefitted.

96. Baba would often persuade the devotees to recite the book and would plead with them out of compassion to do so, for their own good.

97. Incomprehensible is Baba's skill of teaching! His ways and means

were different for different devotees. They could be near or far away but he would be close to them in their hearts.

98. Though he would sit in the *Masjid* and allot certain work to a person, he would get it done by extending his own powers to the person.

99. He would tell Bapusaheb Jog to read the *pothi* which he would read regularly and religiously in the *wada* and the listeners also came to listen.

100. Every afternoon, after the meals, Jog would go to Baba, bow down at His feet, take *vibhuti* and ask for permission to start the reading of the *pothi*.

101. Sometimes he read the 'Dñyaneshwari' and sometimes the 'Nath Bhagvat'. He would recite with a heart filled with joy and would also explain the meanings.

102. Since this order was given, those devotees who came to visit Baba were directed by Baba to go and listen to the *pothi*, as soon as they came.

103. Sometimes he would tell stories in short which the listeners would listen to attentively and try to retain. No sooner he would tell them to get up and go to listen to the reading of the *pothi* in the *wada*.

104. When the listener, with full devotion, would go to listen to the *pothi*, he would find such a story by which the meaning of the earlier story (as told by Baba) would be confirmed.

105. The 'Dñyaneshwari' of Dñyaneshwar or the words of Eknath (in the 'Bhagvat') would be found to be, as it were, adopted from Baba's story. This would greatly surprise the listeners.

106. Sometimes, though there would not be such a schedule as to read a certain portion from the *pothi*, yet Jog would read it out, or refer to, by some coincidence.

107. The 'Bhagvat Gita' and the 'Bhagvat' are the two main books which contain the essence of the *Bhagvat dharma* and Jog would regularly read them.

108. 'Dñyaneshwari' is the commentary on the 'Gita', which is given the title 'Bhavartha Dipika', while Nath advocates the philosophy in a nutshell in the eleventh chapter of the 'Bhagvat'.

109. So be it. Thus the *Bhagvat dharma* fame spread. Accordingly, as a daily ritual, I used to read it regularly, but that day I had missed it.

110. One story was read half way. Because the people set out for the *Masjid*, I put away the *pothi*, while reading, and hurried off with them,

111. with a view to listen to Baba's stories. But Baba had something else in his mind. Baba did not like my leaving the 'Bhagvat' and doing anything else.
112. Only for this reason, somehow or the other, Baba made me read the remaining portion of the 'Bhagvat'. Such was Baba's great marvel. My affection overflows as I remember it.
113. So be it. The reading in the 'Bhagvat' was completed. And, my subsidiary story also ends here. By then Madhavrao's *puja* had ended and he came out.
114. "Oh, there is a message from Baba, which I have brought to you: 'Bring, Rs. 15/- as *dakshina* from Shama.'
115. "While I was sitting and serving him, suddenly he remembered you and said: 'Get up and go to Shama, and come back with the *dakshina*.'
116. "He also said: 'Sit for a while at his home. Chat with him for some time. After conversing with him, return thereafter'".
117. When Madhavrao heard this, he was very much astonished and said: "Instead of rupees, offer him my *namaskars*. Say that it is my *dakshina*".
118. "Alright one thing is done. I am carrying fifteen *namaskars* with me. But now, come and sit and chat with me", so said I.
119. "Tell me any story you choose. Quench the thirst of my desire to listen. Let the Ganges of Baba's stories flow from you, for they will wash away my sins".
120. Then Madhavrao said: "Sit down. Such is the *leela* of this God of which you are aware! Rest for a while. Sit.
121. "Take this *pan* and *katha*. The *chuna* and the *supari* are in the box. I'll come back in a moment, after putting my cap on my head.
122. "Unfathomable are the *leelas* of Sai Baba. How many can I tell you? Have'nt you seen enough since you came to Shirdi?!
123. "I am just a villager, while all of you are from the cities. To what extent can I talk about his incomprehensible *leelas* before you?!"
124. He told me that he was coming back and went inside – offered flowers etc. to the deities, put on his cap quickly, returned and sat down to talk to me.
125. "What an amazing sport of God is this! Who can understand his ways? His deeds know no bounds. He remains aloof after making his moves.
126. "Oh! You are all seekers of knowledge – one more learned than the other. Such simpletons as we are, how can we understand Baba's incomprehensible personality?

127. "Could he not explain to you, during the conversation what he wanted to say? Why did he send you to me? Only he knows the meaning of his deeds, because he is not a mortal.

128. "Just now, while flowing with the current of these thoughts, I am reminded of a story. So let us make good use of this time by talking about it.

129. "I will relate to you an incident which took place before my eyes. Whatever was the determination one had, in mind, he saw to it that it was fulfilled.

130. "Sometimes, Baba too, puts a person's love and faith to severe test. He spares no means; and, then gives *upadesh*".

131. As soon as I heard the word *upadesh*, I was reminded of the incident about Sathe's 'Guru Charitra'. I actually felt as if lightening had struck my mind.

132. Could it be that this incident about Shama had been contrived by Baba to ease my mind, which had become wayward in the *Masjid* ? This indeed was an astounding deed of Baba!

133. So be it. This line of thought was suppressed by me immediately. My eagerness to listen to the story had doubled and let us see how it was satisfied.

134. Thereafter, as he started telling the stories about Baba, slowly unfolding them, I felt happier by and by, realising his love for his devotees.

135. Afterwards he told another story and said that there was a wife of a Deshmukh, who thought of spending some time in the company of Saints.

136. Hearing of Sai Baba's fame, the lady came to Shirdi, along with a group of people from Sangamner with a longing for Baba's *darshan*.

137. She was the mother of Khashaba Deshmukh. Her name was Radhabai. With great faith in Sai, she bowed down at his feet and took *darshan*.

138. She had *darshan* with the right formalities. All her fatigue of a long journey disappeared and then she remembered her mission.

139. She ardently desired to make Sai *Samartha* her Guru, so that he would give her the right *upadesh* by which she would attain her goal of life.

140. The lady was quite aged and had immense faith in Baba. She was firmly resolved on getting some *upadesh* from him.

141. "I will not go anywhere else till Baba graces me personally and gives me a *mantra* whispered in my ear.

142. "The *mantra* should come directly from the lips of Sai, because if I take it from anyone else, it will be impure. Lord Sai is the holiest and foremost amongst Saints. Let him choose to bless me."
143. Having thus determined at heart, the lady gave up eating and drinking and became inflexible about it.
144. She was old, as it was. She had not eaten even a morsel nor drunk any water. Yet she had extreme faith in *upadesh*.
145. For three days and nights continuously, the old woman fasted and had decided to continue it till the day Baba gave her the *upadesh*.
146. 'What is the use of visiting Shirdi without receiving a *mantra upadesh*?' She remained unmoving from the place where she was staying and was prepared to die there.
147. She did not have food or water for three days and thus did penance. The lady was exhausted and became very sad.
148. Madhav Rao was worried and thought that the situation was not proper. What should be done about the future, as the old lady was not afraid of death.
149. Then he went to the *Masjid* and sat besides Baba. He asked respectfully, about the day-to-day matters regarding general well–being.
150. "Shama, what are you planning to-day? Is everything alright? That Narayan *Teli* [13] has gone far out of bounds and is giving me a lot of trouble".
151. Thinking about the condition of the old lady, Shama was already dejected. What exactly should he do? Gathering courage, he asked Baba.
152. "Lord, what is this confusion and mystery[14]? Your moves are not understood by others. You make people come to this village and now you are asking my plans.
153. "That old Deshmukh woman is aged and has gone without food or water for three days and is solely depending on you.
154. "That old woman is very obstinate and has great faith in you. You are not ready to even look at her. Why are you making her miserable?
155. "As it is, she is like a dry stick. She is unrelenting, of a very irascible nature and strong-willed. Obviously, without food, she is going to lose her life.
156. "It will be said that the old woman came with the desire to take *darshan* and wished to have *upadesh*. But Sai Baba had no pity on her. He let her die.

157. "Baba, let not such a reputation spread. Tell her what is good for her. Why don't you grace her and wipe out the probable blot?
158. "She has no strength left in her. Her life is hanging by a thread. The old woman will die and you will receive the blame.
159. "The old woman's penance is hard. We are very much worried. Unfortunately, if the old woman dies, it will be a disaster.
160. "The old woman is bent on doing injury to herself in a fit of passion. If you do not favour her I don't see any chance of her survival. Tell her something from your own lips".
161. This chapter has reached the limit set for its length. The desire of the listeners will be fulfilled thoroughly in the next chapter, very lovingly.
162. Later on Baba lovingly gave *upadesh* because of that old woman. By listening to it with respect, ignorance will disappear.
163. Hemad surrenders to Sai; prostrates before the listeners. Now be ready to listen to that which will lead you to cross the worldly ocean with the least efforts.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the eighteenth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called: "Grace that was Bestowed on Me".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Hymn of praise to Ram, simple and lucid, and in use by the common man.
2. It is the story of Narasimha Saraswati Swamiji, who is considred as the *avatar* of Dutta. It is believed that it destroys all evil when it is read and grants salvation.
3. A brahmin well versed in the 'Puranas'.
4. Seven years since Baba's *darshan*.
5. Commentary by Eknath Maharaj on the eleventh *Skanda* (section) of the 'Bhagvat', which had thirty-two chapters (sections).
6. Vyas, noted scribe to whom sometimes authorship is wrongfully attributed.
7. Son of Vyas.
8. Grandson of the Pandavas.
9. Critic of the 'Bhagvat' in Sanskrit and the 'Gita' of the fourteenth century.
10. Saint graced by Dutta and Eknath's Guru, of the sixteenth century.
11. *Tulsi* plant holder.
12. Also written by Eknath.
13. Not a real person, but a personification of something that troubled Baba.
14. The Marathi phrase used is "Gowd Bengal", because these two states are famous for magic practices and hypnotism.

Taking the tumrel in one hand and the *jholi* in the other, he himself moved from doorstep to doorstep of the particular houses every day. (Chp. 8, ovi 93)

Blessed are those at whose doorstep, Baba as a mendicant spread his hand, calling "Oh, lassie, bring me a quarter of a *bhakri*". (Chp. 8, ovi 92)

19

Grace that was Bestowed on Me

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. That Sai is subtler than the subtlest, greater than the greatest, all pervading, filling the entire *Brahman* and covering the universe.
2. A wish arose in my heart to perceive with these mortal eyes such a God, in the garb of some shape and colour.
3. The worshippers of the sun worship him with the help of a thin cotton wick; and the followers of Ganpati make an image of Ganpati out of a mound of jaggery and offer jaggery as *Prasad*;
4. or else, taking water in the palm out of a great ocean and offer oblation to it. All this seemingly looks odd.
5. The sun and the ocean are supreme. But they are only concerned with the faith of the devotees and do not bother about the right or the wrong. They are only concerned with the sentiments of the devotees.
6. 'Birds of the same feather flock together', it is said. Though this is a general rule, the union of the body and the *Atman* is the exception.
7. They are different in nature but there is a great friendship between the two. One cannot be happy without the other and they cannot stay separate even for a moment.
8. Yet, the body is transient. The *Atman* is unchangeable and indestructible. But the love between them knows no bounds. Therefore, the cycle of re-birth takes place.
9. *Atman* is the greatest power. It is more minute than that which is imperceptible, which is the ethereal air pervading the whole universe. The personified will of the Supreme Spirit in the creation is very subtle. It is also called *Maya*.

10. The *Purush* (the Supreme) is subtler than these. All the senses dissolve in it. That is the highest state and that itself is the Pure *Brahman*.
11. Such is that *Atman* which appears to belong to the material world; and has to follow the path of illusion and *karma*, though it is unchangeable and without a blemish, like a crystal.
12. A crystal can turn red, black, yellow as it reflects the colours but it is different from the colours. It is pure and separate and cannot change,
13. just as the mirage in the desert shines lustrously like a polished pearl, or a coil of rope appears like a serpent.
14. To consider the rope as a serpent is actually wrong. So, also to think 'My Body is my Real Self' and take pride in it is also wrong, because it binds the otherwise free *Atman*.
15. The *Atman* is unique. It is separate from the body, the sense organs, the mind and *prana*. It is self-illumined, pure consciousness, not subject to change and without form.
16. Till you have the pride of body, intelligence, mind and *prana*, you have to face the consequences, enjoy and perform the duties, experience the happiness and sorrows also, which are unavoidable.
17. How minute the seed of the Banyan tree! It contains the strength of the Banyan tree. There are innumerable seeds on a tree and millions of trees are contained within them.
18. Thus, as many trees come into being as there are seeds. This phenomena can be witnessed till the end of the world. Such is the universe in reality. Observe it carefully.
19. Permanence, fearlessness, freedom, independence and oneness with the Supreme Self – these are the goals of the being. It should be the end result of being born.
20. Salvation is impossible without knowledge; and knowledge is impossible without detachment. The mind will not consider the world transitory till the concept of detachment takes root.
21. On the path of this transitory world, due to the delusion of the universe, the vision gets dazzled and the traveller fumbles mid-way and does not understand in which direction to go.
22. Such is the deception of the universe, it creates a false illusion for the beings. It seems like a colourful fantasy from a dream, created out of this material world. Therefore, why should one make efforts to cling to it?
23. When one awakes from a dream, the dream disappears. Therefore,

he who has belief in his *Atman*, he does not care to remember the material world.

24. The enlightenment about the truth regarding the nature of the *Atman* and its union with the *Parmatma* cannot take place without breaking the bondage of pain and attachment etc. This is known as awakening and nothing else.

25. Although knowledge is the best of all, which Baba preached day and night, even then for the ordinary people, he advocated the path of devotion.

26. He talked of the greatness of the path of knowledge which was like the Ramphal (bullock's heart fruit) and the path of devotion was like eating the Sitaphal (custard apple), which is simple and sweet.

27. Devotion is like a pure Sitaphal and knowledge is like a ripened Ramphal, one juicier than the other, both with exquisite fragrance.

28. He who waits to let the Ramphal ripen on the tree finds that it tastes very sweet; but if the pulp of the Ramphal is tasted when the fruit is taken raw from the tree and then ripened, it tastes sharp.

29. The taste of the Ramphal is sweeter when it starts ripening on the stem of the tree. If it falls on the ground it tastes sharp. It becomes very sweet if it ripens on the tree.

30. Whoever knows to ripen it on the tree, he alone can enjoy the sweet taste of it. But a Sitaphal does not require such efforts. Still it has good qualities and is also precious.

31. Ramphal has the fear of falling down and even for a person who is in pursuit of knowledge, there is always the fear of falling from grace. He must conquer the eight *siddhis* and should not neglect this even for a little while.

32. Therefore, Sai, the Cloud of Mercy often explained to his disciples about the importance of devotion and the chanting of God's names.

33. Meditation on God is better than pure knowledge. Even Lord Krishna tells this to Arjun. Sai also said that it was the means to break the ties of the world.

34. Enough of this. I will now tell the listeners the story which I was describing in the previous chapter and which was left unfinished. Please listen.

35. An old and enfeebled woman, prepared to die, was bent on aquiring a *mantra* from Sai and began fasting.

36. Seeing her condition, Madhavrao became apprehensive and went to Baba, on her behalf. The narration had advanced upto this point.

37. The lamp of the Sree Sai Satcharita has been lit to indicate the

inner thought of Sai. May its brilliance guide the path of the devotees.

38. Let us continue with the interesting story that Madhavrao had started telling me, according to Baba's orders.

39. He said that seeing the old woman's insistence, Baba graced her. He made her change her mind. This is really an unusual story.

40. Later on Baba called out to her lovingly: "Oh mother, why are you sitting thus in protest?"

41. Baba addressed any elderly lady as 'Mother'; and men as 'Kaka, Bapu, Bhai'. That was a very pleasing way of his.

42. As his heart was full of love, his speech was also sweet. He was a solace to the down-trodden and miserable. Oh, that compassionate Lord Sai!

43. So be it. He called her and made her sit in front of him. Then, as it were, he lovingly handed over the secret key of his own teachings to her.

44. To ward off the sufferings of the world, Baba, the cloud in the form of the Supreme Spirit, showered that water in the form of contentment to quench the thirst of the devotees, who were like the chataks (birds).

45. Baba said: "Mother, tell me the truth. Why do you torment yourself? I am a mere fakir who begs for alms. Look at me kindly.

46. "Really speaking, I am like a son and you the mother. Now pay attention to me. I will tell you about an amazing thing, which will make you very happy.

47. "I had a Guru who was a great *Aulia*, an ocean of kindness. I served him, as much as I could, but he would not whisper any *mantras* to me.

48. "I too had a great longing to receive a *mantra* from his lips, whatever efforts I may have to put in. I resolved never to leave him.

49. "In the beginning he had my head shaved and asked for only two pice, which I gave immediately. I ardently prayed for him to give me those magical words of a *mantra*.

50. "My Guru was a person who had fulfilled all desires. Why did he need two pice? and how could I call him desireless who asked money from a disciple?

51. "Never have such doubts. He did not wish for the coins of the realm. That was not his idea at all. What use did he have for *bullion*?

52. "Faith (Shraddha) and Patience (Saburi) – these were the two (pice)

– and nothing else. I gave them immediately, by which, my Guru was pleased with me, who was like my mother.

53. "Courage is itself patience, oh woman. Never let it leave you! In times of difficulties, it will stand you in good stead.

54. "The valour of a human being lies in being patient. It wards off the sins, worries and miseries. The difficulties are cleared, in some way or the other; and fear and panic vanish.

55. "Patience gains success ultimately. Difficulties run off helter-skelter. The thorn of evil thoughts have no scope.

56. "Patience is a mine of virtues. She is the queen of pious thinking. Faith and she are true sisters and they dearly love each other.

57. "A human being without patience becomes miserable. He may be a scholar or a virtuous person, but life without it is futile.

58. "Though a Guru is very powerful, he expects only wisdom from his disciple, firm faith, lots of courage and patience at the feet of the Guru.

59. "Just as a stone and a gem, if both are rubbed against a grindstone, both shine – but a stone is a stone and a gem after all, a lustrous and precious stone.

60. "Both undergo the same process of polishing. But can a stone shine like a gem? A gem may become a luminous diamond– but the stone will remain the same, only it will become a little smoother.

61. "I lived at his feet for twelve years. The Guru brought me up from childhood. There was never a dearth of food and clothing and he nurtured immeasurable love for me.

62. "He was the embodiment of love and devotion and had genuine affection for a disciple. A Guru like mine would rarely be found. I cannot describe the rapturous joy.

63. "How could I describe that love! When I looked at him he seemed as if he was in deep meditation and we both were filled with bliss. I could never look anywhere else.

64. "I would go on looking affectionately at the face of the Guru, day and night. I knew no hunger or thirst. My mind would get restless without the Guru.

65. "He was the only object of my meditation. I would have no other goal than him. He, alone, was my constant goal. The ways of the Guru are mysterious.

66. "This was the only expectation of my Guru. He did not desire anything more than this. He never disregarded me and always protected me from difficulties.

67. "Sometimes I would stay close to his feet and sometimes away from him. But I was never deprived of the closeness of his company. He looked after me with love and care.

68. "Just as a female tortoise nurses her little ones by her look, my Guru did the same and looked after me.

69. "Oh mother, sitting in this *Masjid*, whatever I tell you please accept as the truth. The Guru never whispered a secret *mantra* in my ear. How can I whisper into yours?

70. "The loving glance of the mother tortoise is enough to make the young ones happy. Oh mother, why do you unnecessarily trouble yourself? I do not know anything about *upadesh*.

71. "The mother tortoise lives on one bank of the river and the children are on the other bank. Their rearing is done by the exchange of glances. Wherefor the trouble of a *mantra*?

72. "Then, go and eat some food. Do not unnecessarily endanger your life. Just pay attention to me and you will achieve the spiritual life.

73. "You should regard me as the whole and sole. I will also regard you in the same way. My Guru did not teach me anything else at all.

74. "There is no need for any other means or money. It is also not necessary to be an expert in the six *Shastras*. Only complete faith is enough because a Guru is he who wards off evil and brings about good luck.

75. "Therefore, the Guru is considered great. Guru is the image of Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar. He who knows him in reality is the blessed one in all the three worlds."

76. When the old woman was explained in this way, that story convinced her. She agreed to give up her fasting and thus honoured his wishes, by putting her head at his feet.

77. Having heard this complete story and having understood the propriety of it, I was happy and at the same time surprised at the revelation of the true meaning.

78. Seeing Baba's powers, I was choked with emotions, my heart overflowed with love and now I fully understood the lesson.

79. Seeing my emotional state, Madhavrao said to me: "Anna Saheb ! why have you become sentimental? And why are you quiet?

80. There are innumerable such stories about Baba. How many should I tell now?" And then the bells (of the *Masjid*) began to ring while Madhavrao was speaking thus.

81. Every afternoon, before the meals, the devotees would go and sit,

in the *Masjid*, and perform Baba's complete *puja* with *gandha*, *akshata*, *arghya* etc., that is with all rituals.

82. Afterwards, Bapusaheb Jog would take the five-wick lamp in his hand and lovingly wave it before Baba with devotion, while the devotees sang the *arati* compositions.

83. The bell proclaiming the *arati* began clanging and we started for the *Masjid*. My wishes were fulfilled.

84. Both men and women participated in the noon *arati*, the women standing up in the *Masjid* and the men remained below in the courtyard.

85. Accompanied by auspicious instruments and the resounding sound of the temple bells, the *arati* compositions would be recited at the top of the voice and joyfully.

86. We arrived at the gate of the courtyard while the *arati* reverberated to the skies. The men had crowded near the steps and there was no room to go up.

87. I was thinking that we should stay down till the *arati* was over and then go up near Baba, as soon as it was finished, along with the others.

88. Whilst I was thinking thus, Madhavrao climbed up the steps and also pulled me up, by holding me by the hand, and took me near Baba.

Madhavrao Deshpande alias Shyama

89. Baba was sitting on his seat, peacefully smoking a *chillum*. In front of him, Jog was waving the five-wick lamp and ringing the bell with the left hand.

90. In this atmosphere of the *arati*, Madhavrao himself sat to Baba's right and made me also sit with him, facing Baba.

91. Then the peace loving, gem of saints, Baba sweetly said: "Give me what *dakshina* Shamrao has given for me".

92. "Baba, this Shamrao is here. He is giving *namaskara* in place of *dakshina* and says consider them as fifteen rupees only. Offer these to Baba".

93. "Very well. Did you have a talk? Did you both say anything to each other? Tell me what you discussed. Tell me everything.

94. "Leave aside the story about the *namaskar*. What did you say to him? Now, tell me fully about each and everything".

95. I, too, was keen to tell the story. Although the loud *arati* singing was persisting, I was beaming with happiness and my uncontainable joy flowed from my lips.

96. Baba, who was leaning against the bolster, moved a little forward. I too, bowed forward and started narrating.

97. "Baba, whatever talks we had were all very interesting; but among all, the particular story about the old woman was astonishing.

98. "As soon as Shamrao told me that story, I understood your skill. Under the pretext of that story, I was sure that I had your blessings".

99. Upon which, Baba very eagerly said: "Tell me the whole story. Let us see what was so astounding about it; and how you felt blessed by it".

100. The story was fresh in my mind since I had just heard it. Besides, it had impressed me a lot. So I related it flawlessly and he seemed happy.

101. In this way, I told him the whole story. Baba also listened to it attentively and then said to me: "Always keep it in mind".

102. And also asked me very enthusiastically: "How sweet is this story which I have just heard! Did it impress you? Did you understand its real purpose?"

103. "Baba by listening to this story, I have regained my peace of mind. My own hankering has disappeared and I have understood the right path".

104. Upon which Baba said: "My ways are different. If you have imbibed the lesson of this one story, it will be beneficial to you.

105. "True knowledge of the *Atman* is to be desired the most and *Dhyana* is essential for this. During *Dhyana* one merges with the *Atman* which leads to quietening of desire.

106. "Detach your mind from the object of the senses and concentrate on that All-pervading Power. Your meditation will be successful and you will achieve the goal.

107. "Meditate always on my formless nature which is Knowledge Incarnate, Consciousness and Bliss.

108. "If you cannot visualise that, then follow the physical image of mine. Bring my image from head to foot, in front of your mind's eye, day and night.

109. "When you will thus concentrate on me, the functions of your mind will unite and the distinction between the meditator, the act of meditation and the object meditated upon will vanish.

110. "Once this trinity disappears, the person doing the *dhyana* will reach that Supreme Energy – this is the goal of *dhyana*. You will then be one with *Brahman*.

111. "The female tortoise is on one bank of the river. Her young ones are on the other bank. They get neither milk nor warmth – only her glances give nourishment to them.

112. "The young ones always think only of their mother. They don't need to do anything else. They don't need milk nor do they need food. The mother beholding them attentively is their only nourishment.

113. "This caring through just looking by the mother tortoise is actually like the showering of nectar. The young ones get happiness and they flourish. Similar is the case of the Guru and the disciple".

114. As these words of Sai were uttered, the loud singing of the *arati* ended; and all shouted; *"Sree Satchitanand Sadguru ki Jai" - Jaikaar*.

115. The *Niranjan* (lamp) which was being waved and all the other formalities were over. The full–fledged *arati* was completed. Then Jog offered lump sugar to Baba and Baba opened his palm to receive it.

116. Jog lovingly put a handful of lump sugar in Baba's palm, in keeping with the custom and did obeisance to him.

117. Baba put the entire handful of lump sugar in my hands and said : "Your state of mind will be like this sugar, if you remember this story.

118. "Just as this lump of sugar is sweet similarly your cravings will be satisfied; you will truly prosper and your heart's desire will be fulfilled."

119. Then I paid my respects to Baba and said: "Your blessings are enough for me. Only grant me this favour. Take care of me".

120. Baba said: "Listen to the story. Repeat it. Recite it always. Remember it and concentrate, so that the essence of happiness will appear.

121. "If you keep in mind whatever you have heard, the mine of your welfare will be opened and your sins will be washed away.

122. "When the wind is blowing strong, quantities of bubbles and foam can be seen on the crest of the rising waves in the ocean and they dash against the banks.

123. Waves, bubbles, foam and eddies are many forms of the same water. They are only visual illusions and they last till the wind calms down.

124. "Should all this be called different kinds of water? Or should they be considered as having vanished? One should understand that this is all creation of illusion and their existence and non-existence is the same.

125. "Similar are the happenings of this creation. A discriminating person does not wonder at it. He does not hanker after the perishable, being attached to the eternal.

126. "*Dhyana* is more important than *Gyan*. But, for *Dhyana* the right knowledge is essential. So far as the concept of *Brahman* is not understood, perfect *Dhyana* is not achieved.

127. "For the sake of real knowledge, *Dhyana* is basically essential. This process is known as *Pratyag Atma Anushthan* i.e. realisation of the Atman. But that is devoid of any particular action. Therefore, how can one concentrate upon it?

128. "*Pratyag Atma* is itself God. God is Guru. There is not the slightest difference amongst the three. One who differentiates will be completely bereft.

129. "When with deep and intent contemplation, the difference between the meditator and the object of meditation disappears, the mind becomes like a lamp which is steadily burning. Peace prevails and that is itself *Samadhi*.

130. "Being absolutely desireless believe that He is present in all beings. When the state of oneness is reached, there is no fear and one is able to concentrate on Him as He comes in your meditation.

131. "Afterwards those ties which are formed because of actions due to ignorance snap fast. The restrictions of this worldly life also are removed and one enjoys the happiness of Bliss- Consciousness.

132. "At the outset, find out whether the *Atman* exists or not; whether it is a separate entity residing in each being or it is one residing in all; whether it is active or passive. Refer to the six *shastras* and find out.

133. "But the real knowledge about the *Atman* is the epitome of knowledge. That is itself liberation and eternal bliss which sprout from it.

134. "Even if a learned speaker like Brahaspati[1] is brought before a blind person to describe an elephant, then after listening to the speech, the blind one will not be able to perceive the elephant. Similarly, it is impossible to describe, in words, that which is beyond words.

135. "Can the oratory of a speaker or the ears of a listener bring back the eyesight which has once been lost? Truly speaking, only the eyes are capable of perceiving the elephant.

136. "If there are no eyes, how can a blind person understand an elephant? Similarly, that divine sight which a Guru bestows on the disciple alone is capable of procuring the wealth of knowledge".

137. To know the nature of Sai is itself the real knowledge. He is the complete essence of that unique knowledge. *Dhyana*, *anushthan* and *darshan* are all combined in his case.

138. False knowledge, passion and chain of actions are the things from which total liberation is possible by meditating upon him and through nothing else. Bear this in mind.

139. Sai does not belong to you or to me. He resides in all beings. Just as the sun belongs to the whole world, he too belongs to all.

140. Now listen to his words which seem common place but are very valuable. If you remember them from time to time, you will succeed in whatever you do always.

141. "Without having an association from some earlier life, no one, not just human beings but even animals and birds, come across one another. Therefore, do not rebuff any one.

142. "Respect the strangers who come to your doorstep. Offer water to the thirsty, give bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked and some space to rest in your verandah to the needy. This will please the Lord.

143. "If anybody is in need of money and you are not desirous of giving, do not give; but at least, don't behave in an insulting manner and bark like a dog at him.

144. "Anyone may call you names in a hundred ways, never retort with bitterness. Tolerate it with patience. You will gain tremendous happiness.

145. "Even if the world turns topsy-turvy, you should remain still. Be steadfast and observe passively.

146. "Break down the wall between you and me. Then the way to approach each other will be clear and there will be no fear.

147. "The sense of duality between you and me is the wall between the Guru and the disciple. Till this wall is not completely demolished, the state of oneness is impossible to achieve.

148. "'Allah is the Master. Allah is the Master.' There is no other protector than Him. His deeds are divine, invaluable and incomprehensible.

149. "It will be what He wills. He alone will show the path. When the time comes, without a moment's delay, the wish will be granted.

150. "People meet as destiny decides. We come together because of good fortune. We should, therefore, nurture affection for each other and enjoy happiness and serenity.

151. "Who is immortal here? Blessed is he who has attained the supreme goal of life. Others only breathe to remain alive".

152. When I heard these sacred words, my anxious mind was put to rest. My thirst was quenched. I was blissfully happy.

153. One may posses incomparable intellect and also firm faith. But to have the support of a Guru like Sai, one's luck must be in favour.

154. To give the essence of these words, Lord Krishna has said the same truth: 'I grant the fruits as per one's deeds, leaving the whole burden on the actions'.

155. The reward will be as per the deeds. The welfare depends upon the efforts. This is the essence of this chapter and this itself is the nectar-like preaching.

156. 'Meditate upon me single mindedly' is the essence of the Bhagvat Gita. God takes full responsibility for the welfare of such persons who have fully devoted themselves to him.

157. Having heard this valuable advice, I am reminded of a quotation from the *Smritis*: "Without the slightest doubt, worship the Gods and then they will take pity on you".

158. "You should take pains but give up worrying about the results completely. I am present, standing behind you and carrying the pot of milk (to give you the fruits). Thus I am always backing you.

159. But, if you think that I should exert and you should only drink the milk abundantly, I will not agree with this. On the contrary, you should be alert and perform the actions. Be active and work for it".

160. These are Baba's sayings or charters. Whoever will accept these words as the truth, he will enjoy the mine of happiness in this world as well as the world beyond.

161. Now I beg the indulgence of the listeners to listen to another personal experience which shows Sai's nurturing nature.

162. If you take a vow to do some good, how Maharaj encourages you! Listen without questioning and observe Sai's manner of blessing.

163. A devotee should surrender unconditionally and observe the remarkable results of devotion. Each day will unfold a new miraculous deed of Sai.

164. Be it so. If a good thought comes to your mind immediately on waking up in the morning, you should foster it.

165. If such a thought continues to prosper, it will bring contentment, sharpen the intellect and please the mind.

166. This is a saying from the saints and I felt like experimenting with it. When I experienced it, I got such a peace of mind that I was greatly amazed.

167. In a holy place like Shirdi, on a Thursday, an auspicious day, I wished to chant the name of 'Ram' continuously the whole day.

168. On Wednesday night, on the bed, until I fell asleep, I fixed my mind on the chanting of the name of 'Ram' and engrossed it in my heart.

169. When I woke up early in the morning, I was reminded of the name of 'Ram'. When this happened, I thought that my tongue had really justified its existence.

170. Therefore I firmly decided to continue thus. Having finished my morning ablutions, I took some flowers, that I found, along with me and set out to have Sai's early morning *darshan*.

171. Leaving behind Dixit's home and passing outside Butti's *wada*, I heard a sweet song beautifully sung by Aurangabadkar.

172. If I try to put the whole song in the ovi metre, the listeners will be deprived of its original beauty and may not enjoy it.

173. So, I will sing the whole song for you, word by word, by which the loving listeners will be happy. The song contains the basic *upadesh*.

Song

"Oh my brother, I have received the collyrium of Guru's Grace.

I do not believe in anyone but Ram. (Chorus)

1. Within me is Ram and without is Ram.
   Even in dreams it is Sita-Ram.
2. Sleeping and waking is Ram.
   Wherever my eyes go they see perfect Ram.
3. The beautiful experience of the disciple of Janardhan – I see Ram wherever my sight moves."

174. Already, I had decided and resolved to chant the name of Ram. But before commencing to do it, this song which I heard added strength.

175. Thus, I was convinced. Had the great compassionate Sai showered that water on that seed of my resolve?

176. Carrying a *tamburi*[2] in his hand, Aurangabadkar, facing Sai, in the courtyard,[3] was singing full-throatedly and the notes spread everywhere.

177. Aurangabadkar was Baba's devotee. Like me, he had surrendered at his feet. Though he knew so many songs by heart, why was he inspired to sing the particular one at that time.

178. No one was aware of my resolution. Then, why was only that song

being sung? It is as if Baba had pulled the strings and inspired him accordingly.

179. We are all mere puppets and mother Sai is the controller. He rightly suggested the *upasana* without directly saying so.

180. My innermost thoughts were reflected in Baba's mind. In this way, he had actually proved his point. I definitely think so.

181. How great is the power of the name! Great saints have praised it all along. How far can a lowly person like me describe it – that which leads to realisation of God!

182. The fisherman, who was a bandit when he recited these two letters in the reverse order, he turned from an ordinary Valya into Sage Valmiki, and displayed extraordinary word power.

183. When he said the words, 'Mara, mara' the letters 'Ram' were naturally uttered by his tongue and enabled him to write the life and deeds of Ram even before his incarnation.

184. The name of 'Ram' is most pious, by which the sinner can be salvaged. The name of 'Ram' brings treasures of joy. The name of 'Ram' is equivalent to singing *bhajans*; and its recitation can lead to *Brahman*.

185. By simple repeated utterance of the name of 'Ram' the bonds of birth and death will be broken. By the remembrance of the name of 'Ram' the gains will be multifold.

186. Whenever the name of 'Ram' resounds, the *Sudarshan Chakra*[4] of Vishnu will operate and it will destroy millions of obstacles. The name is the protection for the weak.

187. Sai does not require a particular place for his teachings – nor a right time or a right setting. Even while talking, walking or sitting he is able to effortlessly teach pure knowledge to all.

188. Listeners, now listen to an interesting story in connection with this, with respect. The story will show Sai's compassionate nature as well as his all-pervasiveness.

189. Once a great devotee, while somebody was talking of another person, was prejudiced and got deeply involved in criticising.

190. The virtues were overlooked; and only the criticism was recounted on all sides. The actual story was lost sight of and this became a reviling session.

191. If at all there is a reason (for disagreement), or if someone behaves abominably, then one should frankly and sweetly try to correct him, and should pity him.

192. Never belittle anybody. This is known to everyone. But such a nature cannot be suppressed. It cannot remain under control.

193. From within it rises, gradually, till it is blurted out of the mouth. When the lips open, happiness and contentment are pushed out.

194. There is none else better than a critic, in the three worlds. He can help a person. Criticism does good to a person and a critic thus obliges a person.

195. Some people remove dirt with the help of the soap-nut; some use products like soap; some do it with clean and pure water; but a critic does so with his tongue.

196. In a way, they bear the deterioration of their own character for the sake of others, to do good to them. Therefore, their deeds are, really speaking, indescribably benedictory. Surely, a critic should be highly respected.

197. At every step, he points out the hazards. He lets a person know his shortcomings under the pretext of criticising, thus helping him to avoid future calamities and obliging everyone. How much more could I praise him?

198. Many people have praised them. Even saints and sages have talked about their greatness. I bow down to that band of critics.

199. Those who were listening were nauseated. The critic left the scene and went to the toilet and the rest of the group started towards the *Masjid* for Baba's *darshan*.

200. Baba was omniscient. He instructed the devotees at the proper time. Listen, how he made use of this incident later on.

201. On the way to the Lendi along with the others, Baba inquired about that devotee and was told that he was at the village stream, for toilet purposes.

202. After completing his ritual, Baba returned from the Lendi; and that devotee also turned from the village stream to go home.

203. Both of them met. Oh, listeners! I pray to you to carefully listen to all that transpired at that meeting.

204. Nearby, next to a hedge, a village sow was eating excreta with great relish. Baba pointed out that to him.

205. "Look how its tongue is enjoying the taste of the human excreta! A person who reviles his own brethren to his heart's content is similar to it.

206. "If you are born as a human being, after doing a lot of good deeds in your previous birth, and if you thus waste the life, what good can Shirdi do for him, who is set to ruin himself?"

207. With these words, Baba walked away. The devotee was inwardly hurt. He remembered the morning's incident and those words pierced his heart.

208. So be it. Baba teaches his devotees lovingly, at the opportune time. If the essence of his teachings is retained, can salvation remain far?

209. 'If God cares for me, he will give me everything without my making any efforts is a promise. This is true as far as food and clothing is concerned.'

210. But if anyone, who is a spiritual seeker, applies it he will ruin himself completely. Baba's words: "He will reap as he sows" are invaluable, in that respect.

211. Some other words of Baba will bring about tremendous happiness. If only one has the warmth of faith and devotion, they will be deep-rooted in the heart.

212. "I do not reside in one place. I am present in the waters, on the land, in the woods, amongst the people and away from the people, in your own country and in foreign lands, in the skies and in the light of the sun.

213. "I have taken this human form to remove the misconcept of those who consider me to be present only in this body of three-and-a-half arms length.

214. "Those who sing my praise continuously, day and night, they are themselves replicas of my inner self without any differentiation.

215. "If sweetness can be separated from jaggery, if the ocean can be separated from the waves, if the eyes can see without light, then only can my simple devotee be separated from me.

216. "He who definitely wishes to escape the bonds of birth and death, should follow the path of righteousness very meticulously and be always tranquil.

217. "Such a person should abandon harsh words; should not pick on others' weaknesses; remain engaged in good acts concentrating on one's own duties.

218. "Surrender your mind and heart to me. Remember me continuously. Do not bother about your body and leave it to itself. Such a person need not fear nor have to concern himself about the three-fold purification.

219. "He who looks to me with undivided attention, praises me and listens to my praises is blessed. He, who has no other desire except me, he only will reach the Supreme Self".

220. "Take my name and surrender to me" was told by him to everyone. But he asked those who wanted to know him to listen and meditate.

221. He gave different kinds of observances to different people. To one, he suggested chanting the name of the Lord; to another, he suggested listening to the deeds of the Lord and yet, to another the worship of the feet of the Lord.

222. To some he prescribed the *Adhyatma Ramayan*; to some the recitation of *Dñyaneshwari*; to some he suggested reciting the *Harivarda*[5] and to some to read *Gurucharitra*.

223. He would keep some near him; ask some to go to Khandoba's temple; to some he keenly suggested to study and memorise the *Vishnu Sahasranama.*

224. To some he suggested the *Ram Vijaya*[6]; to some meditation; to some the power of the name of the Lord; to some he suggested the *Chandogya Upanishad*[7] and *Gitarahasya*[8] and told them that through faith only they could understand the essence of all.

225. His ways of teaching were exceptional. Some were taught in a particular way, some in a different way. To some he taught directly and appeared in the dreams of others.

226. Many people from different castes[9] came for his *darshan* and help. He even appeared in dreams to those who were fond of liquor.

227. He would sit on their chest pressing with his hands and feet and making them take a solemn vow never to drink again.

228. Like the pictures that are drawn by an astrologer on the walls of a house where a wedding is to take place, he would write the *mantra* "Guru *Brahma*, Guru *Vishnu*"[10] etc. in a dream vision on the walls of the house of another devotee.

229. If a person tried to practise the *yogic asana* and also the difficult *Hatha Yoga* without Baba's knowledge, Baba would come to know about it because of his extra-sensory powers and then he would rightly penalise.

230. He would catch hold of someone, whom he did not even know, and send a message : "Can you not sit quietly, and patiently eat your bread?"

231. To some he would give an ultimatum and tell him that : "I am a very strict person[11] by nature. I will tell you mildly only once or twice and if inspite of that you don't listen, at the end it will be very difficult for you.

232. "I will try to tell once, to tell twice, but if a person does not care to

listen to my words, even if he be my kith and kin, I will not hesitate to tear him apart and throw him away".

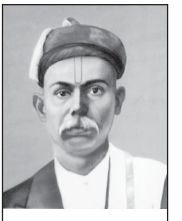
233. He was a genius and magnanimous. How can I, an ordinary person, describe his mysterious powers? He would give knowledge to some; develop non-attachment for some; some learnt goodness from him; some got awareness of true devotion from him.

234. In certain cases he advocated the right discipline of behaviour. I will give an example of such an episode to my listeners.

235. One day, at high noon, without any rhyme or reason, Baba suddenly came near Radhakrishni's[12] house.

236. There were some people accompanying him and he asked for a ladder to be brought quickly to him. Someone immediately got one for him.

237. Baba put it against the wall of the house and climbed up to the roof. No one knew what was in his mind and what was his plan.


Waman Gondkar

238. "Actually, the ladder was put against Waman Gondkar's house and Sree Sai climbed up the ladder to the roof himself, very swiftly.

239. The houses were adjoining and he crossed over quickly to Radhakrishni's roof. Nobody could understand the mystery.

240. At that time, Radhakrishni was suffering from severe malaria and she was very restless.

241. Baba himself was so weak at that time that he had to be supported by two people on both sides. At that moment from where did he gather that strength?

242. Immediately he crossed to the other side of the roof and from the eaves came down the slope and descended by the same ladder which was fixed to that wall.

243. As soon as his feet touched the ground, he very meticulously gave two rupees to the person who had brought the ladder for him so promptly.

244. The man had only fixed the ladder at two places. That was the only work he had accomplished and about which he could be proud. And, in return, Baba gave him so much.

245. People were naturally curious and thought how could Baba give so much money to the person who had brought the ladder for him; and talked amongst themselves.

246. At that time, somebody took courage to ask. Baba replied: "Nobody should take another's labour, in any way, free of charge.

247. "One can accept work from a person but one should always evaluate a person's efforts and repay. One should discipline oneself never to take free services from anyone".

248. Who can have the profound understanding of Baba's behaviour? Only he knew! The minds of saints are not penetrable.

249. The words from his mouth that we listened to were our guides and support. If we firmly believe and behave accordingly, our daily lives will be smooth.

250. So be it. The next chapter is definitely more enjoyable than this. It is about an innocent young daughter of a maid servant who uncovers the very spirit of the *Shruti*.

251. Ganu Das, who was a blessed *kirtankar*, had taken to heart to translate the *Ishavasya Upanishad* into vernacular, for the benefit of the Marathi speaking people.

252. He wrote the book with Sai's blessings but some deeper meaning was not clear to him and created doubts in his mind. See how Baba cleared them!

253. While sitting in Shirdi, Baba said to him: "When you return to Parle[13], the maid servant at Kaka's[14] house will clear your doubt."

254. The Deity of Speech, like a bee, hums around the lotus of *Ishavasya.* Only the most erudite may enjoy its fragrance and the clever listeners are invited to partake of it.

255. Enough. This will be narrated in the next chapter. Sai is the doer, the cause of the narration, the Cloud of Mercy. Listen according to your convenience, for you will be blessed.

256. Pant Hemad surrenders to Sai and also humbles himself before God and all the creatures. I request the attention of all the listeners to this wonderful story of Sai, which is very sweet.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the nineteenth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people called "Grace that was Bestowed on Me".

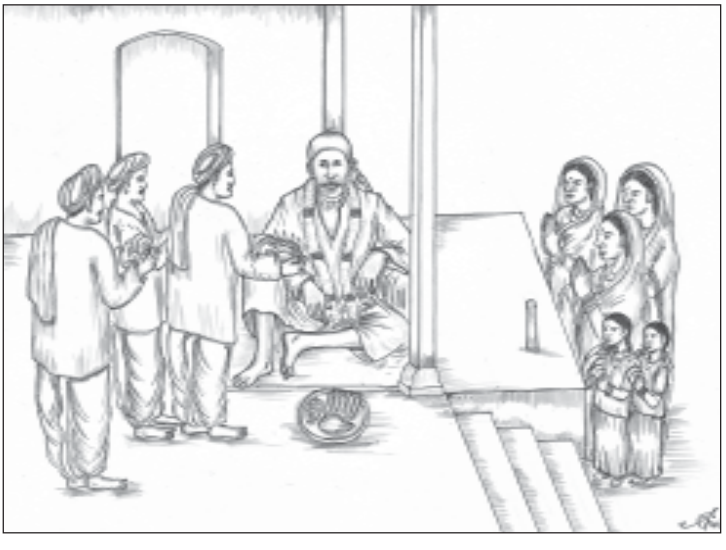
This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Guru of the Gods, considered to be very brilliant.
2. A Turkish guitar with four wires.
3. Of the *Masjid*.

4. The discus of Vishnu, a flaming weapon.
5. Marathi commentary on the tenth *skanda* of the *Bhagvat* by Krishna Dayaranav.
6. Sreedhar Swami's story of Ram in Marathi in verse form.
7. One of the oldest and longest *Upanishads*. Deep and philosophical thoughts are explained herein.
8. Tilak's commentary on the *Gita* in Marathi.
9. Distinguishable by the way in which they tied their turbans or headgear.
10. The Guru is *Brahma*. The Guru is *Vishnu*. The Guru is *Maheshwar*. The Guru is *Parabrahman* made manifest. Obeisance to that Sree Guru.
11. Like a Rajput who gives a word and will not break it, even if it cost his life. They are called '*Kadva*' (bitter).
12. Sree Sai Baba used to call Radhakrishnabai by this name.
13. Ville Parle, a suburb of Bombay.
14. Hari Sitaram Dixit, who was called Kaka by Baba.



Bapusaheb Jog waving the five-wick lamp

Afterwards, Bapusaheb Jog would take the five-wick lamp in his hand and lovingly wave it before Baba with devotion, while the devotees sang the *arati* compositions. (Ch. 19, ovi 82)

20

The Lesson of the Essence of the Ishavasya

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Aum. I bow down to the Guru. You are the 'Manasarovar' (Lake in Himalayas) for us devotees, the swans. Your sweet words of wisdom are the pearls and your feet are our only refuge.
2. You are our eternal support. You are most benevolent. You feed us the *prasad* of pearls of salvation. You give us refuge and tranquility. You make us escape the cycle of births and deaths.
3. How great is the abode of *Siddha* Sai! Worldly fatigue is removed with mere darshan. When you go nearer, the delusion of the world disappears and when you are in his company, he wards off the weariness due to *karma*.
4. Originally, Sai is without a form. For the sake of his devotees he has taken a form and participated in the drama as an actor, along with the actress *Maya*.
5. Let us meditate on Sai, of those attributes, and go to Shirdi for a while. Let us observe carefully, what happens after the noon arati.
6. After the noon arati, Maharaj would come to the outer side of the *Masjid* and distribute *udi* amongst the devotees with a most compassionate look.
7. The loving devotees, too, would immediately hug his feet, then standing up, they would adoringly look at his face and enjoy the shower of *udi*.
8. Baba also lavishly offered handsful of *udi* in the palms of the devotees. With his thumb he would also apply it to their foreheads. Oh, how much abundance of love he had in his heart!
9. "Bhau go and have your meals. Go Anna, go and eat your delicious

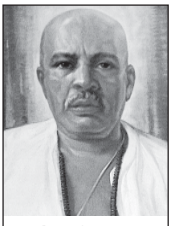
food. Go, everyone, go to your own homes." He would address each one, in this manner.

10. Though to-day it is not possible to behold that, all those past glorious moments could be recaptured at those particular places, at the particular times by means of hard concentration.

11. So be it. Meditating thus, visualising him from his feet upwards to his face, prostrating before him humbly and lovingly, let us continue to narrate the story.

12. At the end of the last chapter, I had told the listeners, that Baba had made a maidservant to clear the doubts about the meaning of the *shruti*.

13. Ganu Das had started to write the commentary 'Ishavasya Bhavartha Bodhini', in which some meaning was obscure, so he came to Shirdi, to his *Sadguru* for elucidation.



Das Ganu

14. At that time, Baba said: "When you return, the maidservant at Kaka's house will clear your doubt".

15. That is the last point of narration. Now let's continue from thence. Listeners should listen carefully, so that their attention is not distracted.

16. Ganu Das had started to explain the meaning of every stanza of the 'Ishavasya Upanishad'[1], in verse form, for those who did not know Sanskrit.

17. With this intention, he translated the meaning of 'Ishavasya' into simple, lucid, Marathi.

18. This 'Upanishad' is full of hidden meaning. Though the word-to-word translation was achieved, unless the deeper, implied meaning was clear, he felt dissatisfied.

19. The essence of the four vedas is really the treasury for the 'Upanishads'. But without the grace of God and Guru it is difficult to understand.

20. One may say that I am learned and I will try on my own to understand the 'Upanishads' and explain the meaning exactly.

21. But it is never possible. It cannot be brought into practice till a Guru's blessings are received. The secret riddles are impossible to solve and at every step one would come across difficulties.

22. But for him who seeks the feet of the Guru, there is not the slightest difficulty. The profound meaning reveals itself very naturally to him.

23. That knowledge, which is the science of realisation of the Self, is a weapon to destroy the cycle of birth and death. It can be achieved by giving up the ego and attachment; and thus, one should qualify oneself to expound on it.

24. If one takes refuge at the feet of such people, then within moments the meaning is revealed. That imprisoned intellect is liberated and the perplexity of the meaning disappears.

25. While translating the 'Ishavasya' into Marathi, Das Ganu underwent such a plight. But when Sainath blessed him, his difficulties were overcome.

26. He had little knowledge of the Sanskrit language. Even then, he bowed down to Acharya Vidyaranya[2] and at Sai Baba's feet and began to write the verses in the verse form.

27. Ganu Das's language was like the flow of milk to which was added the sugar of Sai *Prasad*. Now, oh listeners, listen to the sweetness resulting from it, for a moment with respect.

28. So be it. You should read the original if you wish to understand fully the implications and the meanings of the Bodhini[3] to which I have referred, a while ago. But the purpose of my narration is different. Bear it in mind.

29. If his devotees come across any difficult passages while reading any book, Maharaj can satisfy him without uttering anything. See how he does it.

30. This is the purpose of narrating this story, so that the listeners should understand the gist. I have only this in my mind. So, now, listen and pay attention.

31. The writing of the commentary in verse form was completed. Scholars approved of it. Ganu Das' aspirations were fulfilled. But, certainly, one doubt remained.

32. He put it before the scholars. They all discussed it at length. But the doubt was not cleared to his satisfaction.

33. In the meantime, for some reason, Das Ganu had to go to Shirdi; and lo! His problem was solved in the simplest of ways.

34. He went to have Sai's *darshan*; held the feet of the Lord at his head; prostrated himself and felt full of happiness.

35. One compassionate glance from a saint, sweet words from the mouth of a saint, the smiling face of a saint – bestow the devotees with good fortune.

36. Even the mere *darshan* of saints is able to wash off all sins. How can

the good fortune of those be described who are permanently in their company!

37. "Hello Ganu! From where have you come?" inquired Baba. "Is everything alright? Are you happy and contented?"

38. Ganu Das answered: "When you have graced and protected me why should I be unhappy? I am profoundly happy.

39. "You know everything, so why are you making small talk, as a formality. I too am aware why you are asking about my happiness.

40. "You propelled me to start a new venture. When it is in full swing, you have created an insoluble problem which no one can resolve however it may be tried".

41. Thus ran their mutual exchange, as Ganu Das pressed his feet and asked the question referring to the 'Ishavasya Bhavartha Bodhini'.

42. "While writing the 'Ishavasya Bhavartha Bodhini' my pen has stopped. Many doubts and misconceptions arise in my mind. Baba, please solve them".

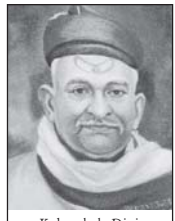
43. He presented the whole matter, from the beginning to the end, at Baba's feet, with respect, and placed his doubt which was extremely difficult to solve.

44. Ganu Das humbly pleaded to Sainath saying: "All my efforts over this book are going to be futile. You know the whole of the story about the 'Ishavasya'.

45. Unless the doubt is cleared, the contents of the book will not be clear." Maharaj gave him his blessings and said: "Be happy.

46. "Oh, what is so difficult about this? When you go back to your place, the maid servant from that Kaka's house will remove the doubt easily".

47. That Kaka was Bhausaheb Dixit, one of Baba's loving devotees, who was always engaged in the Guru's services, fully devoting his mind, body and speech to him.


Kakasaheb Dixit

48. At a little distance from that famous city called Bombay, in a village called Parle, stayed this Haribhau.

49. His real name was Hari, which his parents gave him. People called him Bhausaheb and Baba had yet a third name for him.

50. Mahajani was called 'Bade Kaka', Nimonkar 'Matare Kaka' and Bhausaheb 'Langde Kaka[4]' or 'Bambiya Kaka[5]'.

51. The parents give one name; a name is also there according to the

zodiac sign and nicknames are also given. Thus there are many ways of giving names.

52. Maharaj gave different names and these were used many a times. That name itself became like a title which was lovingly held.

53. Sometimes, he was called 'Bhikshu,'[6] sometimes 'Kaka'; Baba stamped him with this and Kaka became famous in Shirdi by that name only.

54. Ganu Das was surprised and all others were astonished also. How could Kaka's maidservant resolve the doubt?

55. A maidservant is after all a maidservant. How much education could she have had? How learned could she be? Everything seemed strange!

56. To discover the meaning of the *shruti* is far beyond the intelligence of a maidservant. "Maharaj is just joking" – people spoke thus.

57. All thought that Maharaj was only indulging in humour. But Baba's words, even though uttered jocularly, were accepted as truth by Ganu Das.

58. Having heard those words of Sai, people thought that those words were said casually but for Das Ganu those words were the real truth.

59. Though Sai had spoken casually, all the people were anxious to experience the outcome of those words.

60. Whether they may or may not be uttered jokingly, they could never be meaningless, because in every word that Baba spoke there was a store of profound meaning.

61. Whatever Baba said, these were not mere words but the seals of destiny. Not one word would ever be futile. It would accomplish its task at the proper time.

62. This was Das Ganu's firm belief, whatever may be the feelings of others. According to the measure of one's faith, the fruits are received.

63. One gets fruits according to one's devotion. One has the strength according to one's belief. A loving heart determines the extent of purity of experience.

64. He was the crown jewel amongst those who were learned. His words were never untrue. He had pledged to fulfil the desires of his devotees. That was his creed.

65. The Guru's words are never in vain. Listen to this story attentively. All the miseries of the world will disappear and you will take to the spiritual path.

66. Ganu Das returned to Parle and went to Kakasaheb Dixit's house,

wondering eagerly as to how Kaka's maidservant was going to help him.

67. The next day, in the early hours of the morning, while Ganu Das was still in bed enjoying those moments of perfect contentment after a sound sleep, a strange incident happened.

68. A young peasant girl was singing in a melodious voice in a tune that touched Ganu Das' heart.

69. The song was sung with long drawn notes. The composition was appealing. When he heard it, he was carried away and he listened attentively.

70. Suddenly he was fully awakened. His attention was caught by the meaning of the song. He listened to it with rapt attention and was thoroughly pleased.

71. 'Whose daughter is this child who sings seriously and melodiously? She has fully explained the enigma of the 'Ishavasya', he mused.

72. 'Hope that she is the same maidservant. Let me go and see who she is, who has through her simple language revealed the meaning of the *shruti*'.

73. When he went outside, he saw that she was really a peasant girl, cleaning the utensils in Kaka's backyard at the particular place assigned for such work.

74. When he inquired, he discovered a surprising fact that this girl was the sister of a male servant called Namya, who was serving at Dixit's home.

75. He was certain that she was that maidservant. Her song wiped off all doubts. What can the saints not do? Even a buffalo recited the *Vedas* at the command of one[7]!

76. Thus the song sung by this girl became the means of Das Ganu's satisfaction. All the people understood the implications and the greatness that lies behind Baba's jocular words.

77. Some said that Ganu Das was sitting and doing his puja in the temple room in Kaka's home at the time when he heard the song.

78. Whatever it was, the conclusion is that you should mark how Maharaj taught his devotees in different ways.

79. "Sit wherever you are and ask me. Why do you wander from place to place? I will satisfy your curiosity. Have this much faith.

80. "I fill the space. There is not a place where I am not. I appear anywhere where there is devotees' deep devotion".

81. Be it so. That girl was eight years old and wearing torn rags and was singing sweetly about the description of a beautiful orange *sari*.

82. "How lovely is the *sari* with its brocade work; how beautiful is the border; how wonderful is the ornamental end", was the burden of the song which engrossed her.

83. With scarcely enough to eat, her body barely covered by the rags she wore, yet she appeared to be happy singing about somebody's orange *sari*.

84. Seeing her poverty and her romantic nature, Ganu Das felt pity for her and he said to Moreshwar[8].

85. "Look, her body is barely covered. Why don't you give her a *sari*? God will be pleased and you will also be performing a meritorious deed".

86. Moreshwar was a kind-hearted person, by nature; so, at the request of Das Ganu he bought a nice *sari* and happily presented it to the girl.

87. The girl was very happy when she saw the *sari*. It was like a person who subsisted usually on coarse and unsavory food and is lucky enough to get a feast.

88. The next day she wore that *sari*, whirled and danced about, excelled all the other girls as she was very pleased with the *sari*.

89. The day after she put away the new *sari* in a box and wore her old torn *sari* but did not look disheartened.

90. Though she did not wear it and had kept it aside, Ganu Das felt that her previous longing had disappeared because of the different attitude.

91. She kept her new *sari* at home and came along wearing the torn one again. Still she did not look forlorn on account of the deficiency of a *sari*.

92. To wear tattered clothes because you are incapable of wearing anything else is a different issue and being capable of possessing and yet doing the same is different. The latter is known as being contented. Thus happiness and unhappiness depend on one's attitude.

93. This way Ganu Das' riddle was solved. He discovered the essence of the 'Ishavasya' and the meaning was clear to him, then and there.

94. When God has completely pervaded the whole of the universe, how can anybody think that there could exist a place without the presence of God?

95. That is Perfect and this too is Perfect. This Perfect comes out of that Perfect. If something is taken from that which is Perfect, the remaining will also be Perfect.

96. The girl's poverty was an act of God; even her ragged clothes were a part of it. The donor, the donee and the donation also belonged to destiny. God pervades all.

97. 'Me and Mine' – should be completely given up. Act without pride and enjoy the pleasure with an outlook of non-attachment. Have no desire for anything.

98. Such were Baba's words that they never failed to have the desired effect. Many people had experience of it. He never left Shirdi till the end; but he could appear in front of people even in the remotest places.

99. He appeared at Machchindargad for the sake of a person; or for someone else he would appear in any city like Kolhapur, Solapur, Rameswar, at his will.

100. To some he gave *darshan* in his usual dress and form, to some he appeared in dreams or when awake, be it day or night. He would satisfy the wishes of his devotees.

101. Such incidences were not a few. How many of them could be described? Though he stayed in Shirdi, there was not a place he could not reach.

102. Just take the case of this girl, a mere stranger, an ordinary, poor maidservant, who sang the song describing the orange coloured *sari* very casually.

103. That a doubt should arise (in the mind of Ganu Das) and it should be placed before Baba; that it should be answered by the maid who stayed at Kaka's! Is this not *Maya's* chimerical handiwork?

104. How did Baba know that there was such a maidservant there? and that she would sing a song sometime? and that it would explain the meaning of the *shruti*?

105. But it did happen and certainly it did! Ganu Das was amazed. His doubts were cleared and he understood the meaning of the 'Ishavasya'.

106. The listeners may wonder why all this was contrived! Why did Baba himself not clear the doubts, then and there only, with his own lips?

107. Couldn't he have done it there? But then the greatness of it all would not have been understood. Baba showed that the girl was encompassed by God[9].

108. The elucidation of the reality of the *Atman* is the subject of all 'Upanishads'. This is in itself salvation, without any doubt. This is the precept of the Gita also.

109. The beings are different but the *Atman* is one. The *Atman* is incapable of enjoyment and also action. It is not impure and is not bound by sins or merit of good deeds.

110. 'I am a high-bred Brahmin by caste, and all others are low caste.' Till such conviction of discrimination exists, there are necessarily the bonds of *Karma*.

111. 'I am formless and everywhere. There is nobody besides me. I am in all creation' – is the expression of a self-realised man.

112. Man has fallen from the highest state of *Brahman*-hood. His definite determination should be to retrieve that lost position again, somehow, in some way.

113. The *shrutis*, *smritis* and the *Vedant* philosophy also propagate this. This is surely the ultimate aim that the fallen may be lifted back to his original state.

114. 'God resides in every being' – till such time that this consciousness is not attained, enlightenment cannot be granted even by Lord Hrishikesh[10] himself.

115. By performance of one's duties, the mind will be purified. The concept of the oneness of the *Atman* will be clear; and this knowledge will protect, like a shield, against the dualities of passion and miseries of the material world.

116. That Almighty God, who envelops all the three worlds, along with the organic and the inorganic beings is Inactive, Blemishless, Beyond the Material Nature, Formless.

117. God pervades the world of names and forms, from inside and outside. I alone am that all-pervading Spirit, devoid of any particular shape.

118. That which in reality is without a form appears to possess a form because of illusion. For a covetous person only this material world exists; but the very same world is meaningless for a non-attached person.

119. This ordinary material world of beings, movable and immovable objects, should not be taken into account at all. You should have full faith in God, who is the Supreme One.

120. If you cannot comprehend this concept about this world and its nature, then at least try and give up the passion for accumulation of wealth and gold etc.

121. Even if this is impossible to practise, then remember that you only have a right to action. Perform duties as long as you live, even if it be for a hundred years.

122. That should be practised always in accordance with the doctrines prescribed, by the scriptures, for example *agnihotra* etc. in the proper fashion, as per the caste and creed to which a person belongs, till the intellect becomes pure.

123. This is one way of inner-purification. The other is renunciation. But without practising either, only mundane knowledge will be collected and one will have to undergo all suffering as destined, which will chain you forever to the cycle of life and death.

124. This Knowledge of Self-realisation and the 'Upanishads' was not imparted unless the worth of the person is realised. The doctrines of the 'Upanishad' remain only superficial till the sense of oneness is not developed within.

125. If the seeker demands it initially it has to be given. Therefore, Baba sent Das Ganu back, saying that the maidservant would clarify.

126. If Baba himself had imparted that knowledge then the subsequent incidence would not have occurred. 'I pervade everything and there is nothing without ME'. This understanding about Baba would not have been realised.

127. "That Kaka's maidservant is none other than myself. I have given this indication and explained the 'Ishavasya'".

128. Without God's Grace and the blessings of the Guru, it is impossible to penetrate the Knowledge of Self-realisation. Thus, a first hand lesson from a *Siddha* is essential.

129. Whatever knowledge that lends to the understanding of the *Atman*, only that should be learnt. Actually all established knowledge is Myself and nothing exists beyond Myself.

130. When the clear understanding of the Knowledge of the Self comes about and the doctrine of oneness in duality is realised, that is 'I am one with the Supreme Soul' then God is pleased with such a person.

131. Thus when the nature of the Self is understood and the path of Self-realisation is strictly followed, when one has undaunted faith in the transcendental, then the Ultimate will be reached.

132. In the next chapter, stories about Vinayak Thakur and others are going to be narrated. Let the listeners listen with respect and it will lead to the divine path.

133. These stories are also very pleasing. When the listeners hear them their desires to have a glimpse into the life of a great person will be gratified and the devotees will be blessed.

134. Just as darkness is dispelled when the sun arises, similarly by partaking the nectar in the form of these stories, illusion will disappear.

135. Inconceivable is Sai's skill. Who else but he can relate the stories? I am only an instrument. He himself makes me speak.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the twentieth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Lesson of the Essence of the *Ishavasya*".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Famous out of the eleven important *Upanishads*. Consists of eighteen *mantras*, which are very important. Chinmayananda says: "The Spiritual Presence vitalises the world of matter around man, only to bring about ultimately an evolutionary self-development in the student. The very core of this *Gita* philosophy is the theme that is indicated in the opening stanza of the *Ishavasya Upanishad*. The Infinite Truth pervades everything in the world, and, therefore, renouncing all the multiplicity, enjoy the Infinitude and covet not anybody's wealth.
2. Author of '*Panchadasi* ', a well-known book in Sanskrit of *Vedanta*.
3. *Ishavasya Bhavartha Bodhini*, Das Ganu's book.
4. He had fallen down in London and hurt himself, so he limped.
5. He was fat and plump.
6. Dixit was well off and had a good status in society. But to teach him humility and egolessness, Baba sent him to beg alms; and purposely called him a *Bhikshu*, i.e. a mendicant, before others.
7. Dñyaneshwar made a he – buffalo do this.
8. Moreshwar Vishwanath Pradhan, famous advocate and member of Bombay's Legislative Council.
9. This illustrates the main principle of the *Ishavasya* that God pervades everything.
10. Lord Krishna.

Kaka Mahajani

21

Bestowing Grace

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. At the end of the last chapter, we mentioned about how Thakur and others had *darshan* of a great person. Listen to the story attentively now.
2. Wasted are the words of a speaker if by listening to them, a listener is not affected and does not show the sign that he is overwhelmed with emotions and gets goose pimples.
3. A narration is worthless if the listeners are not in an ecstasy, not choked with emotions and if their eyes are not filled with tears of happiness.
4. Baba's speech was captivating. His style of teaching exceptionally good. His arguments were unique. I lay my head at his feet who reveals something new at every step.
5. One can never be able to meet a holy man till fortune smiles on him. Even if such a person is very close, a sinful person is unable to discover him.
6. There is no need to go far to find proof of this axiom because I am going to tell you about my own experience.
7. There was a famous saint called Pir Maulana who was residing at Bandra. Hindus, Parsis and learned men from other religions used to come to take the *darshan* of that pure soul.
8. I was a magistrate of that place. His *Mujawar* by name Inus, tried indefatigably to persuade me to come for *darshan*.
9. 'Thousands of people come there. Why should I go there on account of the pressure, and spoil my name?'
10. Some such thoughts came to me, and I never went for the *darshan*.

I was, as it were, afraid of my own shadow and somehow ill-luck came in the way.

11. Many years passed. Thereafter, I was transferred from there. Later, when the opportune time came I became attached to Shirdi, for all times.
12. In short, the unfortunate can never reach the vicinity of the saints. This most difficult of meetings can be accomplished only by God's Grace.
13. Now listen to a pleasing story about this. There are from times unknown such secret arrangements of saints, and they go on carrying their mission, while the world is unaware of it.
14. As time flows, the saints choose the place of their liking and appear in human form, to fulfil some mission. But, in reality, they are not different from one another.
15. The place – time – person, though different, a saint realises the essence of the personality of other saints. They are all united inwardly, as they are only one,
16. like the outposts of an emperor situated at different places, with officers in charge to look after the population and its prosperity.
17. Similarly, the emperor of boundless happiness manifests at different places and controls the invisible reins of his own empire.
18. Once, a certain gentleman, who had the privilege of an education in English, holding a Bachelor of Arts degree, climbed step by step and became a big officer.
19. Later on, he became a Mamlatdar and then rose to be an Assistant Collector. Because of good fortune, he came in contact with Sai Baba.
20. Outwardly these posts look very attractive, like mountains from a distance, but if you go nearer to them, they are found surrounded by trees which give an itch. But at the same time these posts command prestige.
21. Those pleasant days are long past when people used to crave for such posts. The general public, too, honoured the officers and mutually they were happy.
22. Let us now talk about present conditions. Gone are those days when it was nice to be in Government Service. Now the responsibilities have increased and the emoluments are insufficient.
23. In the olden times, the Mamlatdar was respected and the Collector was honoured. But that grandeur is no more though one works hard.

24. Be it so. After all, by spending a lot of money on education and after studying very hard, one was able to acquire these high posts.
25. First of all, one had to pass the Bachelor of Arts degree; then become a clerk in the government office; earn a monthly salary of Rs. 30/-. In this manner, one had to go on for some time.
26. During the course of time, he had to go to the *ghats*, learn the surveyors work and live amongst them, measure lands and pass departmental examinations.
27. Later on, if a higher official in the service died leaving his position vacant, then he would be able to get that post.
28. Enough of this lengthy and uninteresting narration. Why should I go on prattling about it unnecessarily? Listen to that story about how such a person met Sai.
29. Near Belgaum, there is a town called Vadgaon. A team of surveyors had camped there.
30. In this town, there was a saint staying there. They went to take his *darshan*, bowed their heads at his feet and received his blessings.
31. That holy person was holding a book called '*Vichar Sagar*' by Nischal Das[1], which he was reading to them.
32. After a while, when these people started to take his leave, the saint spoke to that particular gentleman with great delight. Listen to that.
33. "You may leave now. But be sure to read this book, by which your wishes will come true. Bear this in mind.
34. "Later on, in the course of your work, when you go towards the north, because of your good fortune you will have the *darshan* of a great man on the way.
35. "He will show you the path, further on, and will grant you peace of mind. He will give you advice and impress upon you the knowledge of the Self."
36. The work there was completed; and he was transferred to Junnar. On the way to Junnar, he had to cross the Nane Ghat, which was a big obstacle.
37. The road was very formidable and could be traversed only on the back of a he-buffalo, which was the only means of transport. So a buffalo was brought for him to ride on.
38. Later on, the man may become a senior official and may get horses and carriages. But, presently, he had to satisfy himself with a buffalo. There was no choice.

39. It was impossible to climb the ghat on foot. There was no other convenient transport. Such was the speciality of the Nane Ghat. Thus the conveyance was really unusual.

40. So he took the decision, and a buffalo was made ready. It was saddled and with great difficulty he mounted on it.

41. Though he did mount it, there was a steep climb. The vehicle being, of all things, a buffalo, he was reduced to swinging and swaying and he developed a pain in the back.

42. So be it. The journey ended. The Junnar mission was completed. He got a transfer order and he moved from there.

43. He was transferred to Kalyan, where he made the acquaintance of Chandorkar and heard of Sainath's fame. A desire arose to have his *darshan*.

44. That chance came the very next day because Chandorkar was planning a trip to Shirdi. He said to him "Accompany me on this pilgrimage to Shirdi.

45. "Let us take Baba's *darshan*. Both of us could bow down to him, stay there for a day or two and return to Kalyan".

46. But on that very day, in the civil court in Thane, a case was scheduled for hearing. Therefore he had to give up the trip in his company.

47. Nanasaheb coaxed him. "Come along. Baba is great. He will fulfil your desire for *darshan* : The case is a trivial matter".

48. But, how could he be convinced? He was afraid of missing the date for the hearing. How could he avoid these futile visits, which heaven had destined for him!

49. Nanasaheb Chandorkar told him of previous experiences of other people about how their desire for *darshan* was always fulfilled and the difficulties warded off.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar

50. But he could not bring himself to believe. He could not help his own nature. He said: "First, let the worry get off my mind. Let the suit get over fast".

51. So be it. He then proceeded to Thane while Chandorkar left for Shirdi. When he returned after the *darshan*, something wonderful had happened here.

52. Though he was present at the appointed time, the case was postponed. He had also missed going along with Chandorkar and thus he was full of regrets.

53. He wished that he had believed in him. Chandorkar would have

taken him along with himself and he would have had *darshan* peacefully at Shirdi.

54. The case remained where it was and he had lost the chance to see a saint! Therefore, on the spur of the moment, he decided to go to Shirdi.

55. He thought that perhaps when he reached Shirdi, if he was lucky, he would be able to meet Nana and he would take him to Sainath personally. Then, he would be very happy.

56. 'I do not know anybody in Shirdi. I will be a complete stranger there. If I meet Nana it will be beneficial to me, though it is a remote possibility.'

57. Thinking thus, he boarded the train and reached Shirdi the next day. Of course, Nana was not there.

58. The day he left for his trip was the day when Nana had left Shirdi. By this he was disheartened and felt great disappointment.

59. So be it. He met another friend, a nice man, who took him for Sai's *darshan* and fulfilled his wish.

60. The moment he set his eyes on him, he was overwhelmed with faith and he prostrated himself. The hairs on his whole body stood on end and tears of love flowed from his eyes.

61. While he was thus standing, hear carefully what Baba said to him with a smile of understanding, as he was omniscient.

62. "The path of this place is not so easy as the teachings of the Kanarese Appa or even as the buffalo ride in the *ghats*. There is no alternative but to put in your best exertions".

63. When he heard these significant words, he was overwhelmed with emotions and realised that the words of the holy man whom he had met previously had proved correct.

64. Then he folded his hands together and put his head at the feet of Sai. He said: "Have mercy on me, Sainatha. Accept me an orphan, at your feet.

65. "You alone are my great saint and guardian. Today I have fully understood the teachings in the book of Nischal with all its significance and divine meaning".

66. Where's Vadgaon and where's Shirdi! What a union of spirits of the great saints! How brief, yet enlightening, is their speech! What a magnificent method of instruction!

67. One advised reading a book and predicted a meeting with a great saint, who would give *upadesh* and advise further growth.

68. By Grace of God, he has been met, and he had indicated that he is the concerned person by significant words. The book has been read but now it must be put into practice.
69. Then Sainath said to him: "Whatever Appa has told you is correct. But when you put it into practice, then only your wishes will be fulfilled".
70. 'Nischal Das' 'Vichar Sagar' was mentioned in Vadgaon. Some time, after repeated readings, and after a certain lapse of time, how to put it in practice was taught in Shirdi.
71. First you must read the book carefully, then ponder upon it. With repeated readings, it will lead to total absorption in the subject.
72. Just reading is not enough. It should be put into practice. Otherwise, it is like water on a duck's back[2].
73. Mere reading is a waste of time till the meaning is not experienced, for which the blessings of a Guru, who has the knowledge of the *Brahman*, is required. Mere bookish knowledge is futile.
74. A simple story depicting the meaning will bring out the importance of faith, which is most essential for attaining the goals of life. Listeners should listen to it for their benefit.
75. Once a resident of Pune, whose name was Anantrao Patankar, who had developed urge for Sai's *darshan*, came to Shirdi soon.
76. He had heard all the *Vedas* and read the original *Upanishads*, along with the commentaries; but his mind remained always restless and peace of mind eluded him.
77. When he had taken Sai Samartha's *darshan*, Patankar's eyes were rewarded. After bowing down at his feet he worshipped him with ritualistic accuracy.
78. Afterwards, with folded hands, he sat in front of Baba, very close to him. Anantrao, who looked very lovingly, asked him with extreme humility:
79. "I have read many books, including the *Vedas*, the *Vedangas* and the *Upanishads*. I have listened to the holy *Shastras* and *Puranas*. Yet, why is my mind so despondent?
80. "I now feel that whatever I have read has been wasted. I think that even the illiterate devout devotee is better off than me.
81. "All my study of books, learning of *Shastras* is a waste. All this bookish knowledge is futile as long as my mind remains unsteady.
82. "Oh how empty is the effort I have made over the study of etymology ! To what purpose is the *japa* and *mantra* which does not give peace of mind! How will I then ever acquire the knowledge of *Brahman*?

83. "By word of mouth I have heard that by Sai's darshan all worries are removed and that you show the right direction even in your humorous talk, very easily.

84. "Therefore, Maharaj, Treasure Trove of Austerities, I have reached your feet. Give me your blessings, by which I may have peace of mind."

85. Upon which, Maharaj told him a humorous parable by which Anantrao was satisfied and enjoyed the fulfilment of his learning.

86. Those few words are the entire essence of knowledge. I will tell you that story. Be ready to hear it. It is humorous but meaningful. Who can disregard such words?

87. Baba said, in reply: "Once a merchant came along and at that time a horse passed nine balls of stool in front of him.

88. "The merchant was very efficient. He immediately took off his wrap, and spread it out, collected all the balls and tied a knot and was able to achieve concentration of mind."

89. 'What has Sai Samartha said? What could be its meaning? Why the collection of the stool by the merchant?' He did not understand anything.

90. Thinking thus, Anantrao came back and related the conversation, from the beginning to the end, to Kelkar[3].

91. And said: "Who was the merchant? What was the purpose of those balls of stool? Why was number nine mentioned? Please reveal the meaning to me.

92. "Dada, what kind of riddle is this? I find myself incompetent to solve it. Tell me something which will open Baba's heart clearly to me, in plain words."

93. Dada said: "I too, do not understand. Baba's talk is always of this kind. But I will tell you whatever I am able to understand, as he inspires me.

94. The horse is God's Grace. This is how the puzzle of the nine-fold devotion could be explained. Without devotion one cannot have a union with God and knowledge will not be acquired.

95. 1) Listening 2) Singing the Lord's praises aloud 3) Remembering Lord Vishnu 4) Serving at His Feet 5) Offering prayers 6) Bowing down before Him 7) Being humble 8) Developing affection and 9) Surrendering the *atma* – these are the nine ways of devotion.

96. With full faith, even if one of these ways of devotion is practised, Sree Hari who longs for devotion will appear in the home of the devotee.

97. Chanting of the Lord's Name, practise of austerities, keeping of vows, practising yoga, learning of *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, abundance of metaphysical knowledge and its various explanations – all this is a sham without faith.

98. There is no need to be well-versed in the *Vedas* nor any need to be famous as a scholar. It is neither necessary to sing the praises of God without feeling. Only the loving sentiment of devotion is essential.

99. Consider yourself to be the merchant and grasp the significance of that transaction. When the flag of devotion, in the form of the nine-fold *Bhakti*, flies high, then the Incarnation of Knowledge will be pleased.

100. When the horse passed the nine balls of stool, the merchant eagerly went forward to collect them. Similarly the nine-fold devotion, when adopted, gives complete peace of mind.

101. Only that will give stability to the mind, develop affection for every being, for which seriousness of mind is necessary. Otherwise waywardness is inevitable. This is what Gururaya said, with love".

102. Next day, when Anantrao went to bow down at Sai's feet, he was asked: "Did you gather up the balls of stool?"

103. Anantrao then prayed: "Have mercy on this humble devotee. Then they would be collected effortlessly. Otherwise can one gather such great objects easily?"

104. Then Baba blessed him and assured him with the words "May there be well-being". Anantrao was pleased and enjoyed bliss.

105. Now another short story. Listen to it respectfully. You will come to know about Baba's omniscience and his endeavour to guide towards the divine path.

106. Once a lawyer came and went to the *Masjid.* The moment he arrived. He took Sainath's *darshan* and bowed down at his feet.

107. He then gave dakshina, without being asked, and went and sat near by. He felt like listening to Sai's conversation, with respect.

108. Baba, then, turned his face and uttered words which were meant for the lawyer. The words pierced his heart and the lawyer was repentant.

109. "What frauds people are! They touch my feet, offer *dakshina* also, and abuse me in the heart of hearts. How queer are their ways!"

110. Having heard this, the lawyer kept quiet. But he fully understood the significance. He realised that the words were meant for him only. The essence of the words penetrated deep into his mind.

111. Later on when he went to the wada, he told Dixit that Baba's cutting words had hurt him but they were true.

112. "As soon as I arrived, he fired me. But that was a kind of warning to me that I should never indulge in mocking or backbiting anybody.

113. "As our Munsif was not keeping good health and he was restless, he took leave from the office and stayed on peacefully here to improve his health.

114. "While we were in the chamber of the lawyers, the discussion turned around the Munsif and though we were not directly concerned, conjectures were made.

115. "'Without medication, just by following Sai, can the physical ailments be cured? Does it befit him who has risen to the status of a Munsif (to behave in this superstitious way).'

116. "While he was being thus reviled, Sai was also belittled. I was also party to a small extent to all this and that fault of mine was pointed out (by Baba).

117. "It was not a scolding but a blessing in itself. One should not unnecessarily participate in useless discussion, malign or criticise others and pass bitter remarks behind the backs of people and should refrain from indulging in these bad habits."[4]

118. Besides, this is proof that even if there is a distance of a hundred *koss*, Sai is omniscient and knows the heart of every person.

119. Moreover, one more matter became clear that intervening hills and mountains could not hide anything from Sai. Securely hidden secrets were all open to him.

120. Be it so. From that day onwards, the lawyer decided that in future he would never criticise or utter ill words. That was his vow.

121. 'Wherever and whatever one does, cannot remain unknown to Sai', became a firm conviction. The bad habit was given up.

122. He became conscious of doing good deeds because he knew that Sai, as it were, was watching him from all sides and who can be capable of deceiving Sai? He was thoroughly convinced of this.

123. Though the story concerns the lawyer, it was meaningful in all respects, at all times, and for everybody!

124. The lawyers, the listeners, the speakers and all the devotees of Sai should also take the same vow. I truly pray thus.

125. When the cloud of Sai's Grace showers upon us all, we will be contented. There is no doubt about this. All those who are thirsty will quench their thirst.

126. Inexplicable is Sainath's greatness; unfathomable is the meaning of his stories; boundless are the limits of his biography. He is the incarnation of the Supreme *Brahman*.

127. Now listen to the story in the next chapter, oh you listeners who have faith, with respect. It will fulfil your desires and give peace of mind.

128. Sai Samartha knows the future miseries in the lives of his devotees. He wards them off casually, joking and laughing, in the course of a light conversation.

129. The devotee Hemad surrenders to Sai. Now the present narration is complete. The next story deals with the removal of the difficulties of the devotees.

130. How Sai, the Ocean of Compassion, is aware of the terrible difficulties to befall his devotees in the future and how he removes them by giving a timely warning.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the twenty-first chapter, of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Bestowing Grace".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. This is the translation in Hindi of the Panchadasi, done in the year 1849. It has been also translated in other languages.
2. In Marathi the proverb says "It is like pouring water on an overturned pot, with its mouth down".
3. Ganesh Damodar Kelkar alias Dada Kelkar.
4. Mathurdas from Anjanvel often came for Maharaj's *darshan*. In Shirdi, he stayed with a caterer named Sagun. Once while Sagun and Mathurdas were chatting, there was criticism about some people. Thereafter, Mathurdas went to Maharaj. After he sat down, Maharaj asked him immediately : "What did Sagun say?" Mathurdas was ashamed and realised that whatever talk took place with Sagun was not approved by Maharaj. Mathurdas learnt the lesson never to criticise anyone nor to listen to such talk.

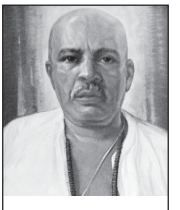
22

Warding off of Untimely Death

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Hail *Sadguru*, the Cloud of Happiness! The Incarnation of Supreme Knowledge and Holiest of the Holies! Hail to thee the Remover of the Fears of this world and the Destroyer of the sins of *Kaliyug* by burning them.
2. You are the ocean of bliss on which waves of different emotions are formed. You, yourself, are in control of them. Bless your devotees.
3. The illusory snake of the semi-darkness becomes a rope in daylight. Both the semi-darkness and the daylight are your creation.
4. You are the one who gives birth to the notion of the existence of a serpent; and you are the one to change that form into a rope. You are the creator of the fear and you are the one who removes that fear in the end.
5. In the very beginning of time, when there is complete darkness, there is neither a serpent nor a rope and there is no scope of any notion of any kind, even that state of formlessness is only you.
6. Later on, when the formlessness develops into a form in the semi-light, it gives the false notion of a snake. That also is created by you only.
7. This concept of appearance and non-appearance is the manifestation of the sport of your changing moods. Your real nature is free of both – existence and non-existence. Thus, nobody can fathom you.
8. The *Shrutis* are silent about this. Even *Sesh* (the legendary serpent), with his thousand tongues, found them inadequate. Who am I then to understand it?
9. Baba! nothing else pleases me than your *darshan*. I feel that I should keep your form in front of my eyes all the time, and meditate on it.

10. You are the incarnation of pure knowledge. To achieve the goal of happiness, there is no other path to us than to be at your feet.
11. Oh, how pleasing is your familiar posture when you are on your seat! Many devotees come to take your *darshan*, bow down their heads at your feet, gathering in their own happiness, lovingly.
12. And how does your foot appear? Your toe appears like a moon, seen between two branches of a tree, as you hold it between your fingers. It fulfils the keeness of *darshan*.
13. At the end of the fortnight of the dark part of the lunar month, after the last night of *amavasya* passes off, all people are naturally eager to have a look at the moon.
14. As soon as the bright half of the lunar month starts, there is a hope to sight the moon and everyone eagerly looks at the sky in the westerly direction.
15. That keen desire of your devotees is fulfilled by you at that time when you sit with your right leg crossed onto your left thigh.
16. The index and the middle fingers of the left hand, (forming a V-shape) hold the right foot and the nail of the big toe is close to the thumb. This shines like the moon on the second day.
17. People have a great desire to look at the moon. But if the crescent of the moon is not seen in the sky, then those who have the knowledge tell you to look through your fingers.
18. And say: "Now look, look through this space. You will be able to see the moon in front of you. Altough the crescent of the moon is small, you can see it right at the spot."
19. Great is the glory of that big toe! Becoming Venimadhava[1] yourself, you made the Ganga and the Yamuna appear, and satisfied Das Ganu[2].
20. When he asked for permission to bathe at the Prayag, he was told: "Know that this, my toe, is the Prayag. Believe in this and have a dip here."
21. As soon as Baba said this, Das Ganu put his head on his feet and the waters of Ganga and Yamuna both appeared at the spot from his two toes.
22. Das Ganu has composed a song on that incident, with the words "Boundless is your power and marvellous your deeds" etc., which the listeners if keen to listen,
23. they can find it in the fourth chapter of the Sai Satcharita. Das Ganu has sung it himself. If the listeners read it again, they'll enjoy it again.


Das Ganu

24. Therefore, like spotting the crescent moon between two branches, by keeping the index and the middle fingers on the toe of his foot, Mother Sai shows a simple way of meditation to his devotees.
25. This is to tell us that to be most humble before everyone, concentrate on the toe. This is a very easy way of devotion.
26. Now we will go back to the previous story about how the devotee was graced. Pay attention to the next part of the story, which is unparalleled.
27. Shirdi had become a holy place, the holiest of holies, because of Baba. Day and night there was a flow of devotees who were pious and desirous of acquiring merit.
28. In all the ten directions, people bore witness to the *Kalpavraksha* in the form of Sai, manifesting in Shirdi, through personal experience or that of others.
29. He regarded the rich and the poor alike and with inconceivable skill ensured the welfare of the devotees.
30. Oh, what a pure affectionate nature! His natural wisdom and his extreme brotherhood (uniform treatment of all)! Blessed is the one who experienced it!
31. Sometimes he is silent and that itself is a long lecture on *Brahman*. Sometimes when he is surrounded by the devotees, he is the Supreme Energy, the cloud of happiness.
32. Sometimes his speech is full of deep and secret meaning. Sometimes he talks humourously; and some other times he gives up indirectness and is outspokenly angry.
33. Sometimes he reveals inner feelings; sometimes he is controlled; sometimes he speaks openly and bluntly – thus he preaches different things, in different ways, to different people.
34. Such is Sai *Samartha's* pattern of behaviour – beyond the powers of the mind, intellect and speech. His deeds cannot be grasped – they are unexpected, incomprehensible and sudden.
35. Our longing to see his face, to talk with him and hear his *leelas* was never satisfied. Still, we were overflowing with joy.
36. One could count the drops of rain; tie the wind in a leather bag[3]; but how can one measure his powers!
37. So be it. Now listen quietly to the story, further on, about how much Sai cared for the safety of his devotees and also about how he warded off their insurmountable difficulties;
38. and how he would forecast the difficulties to befall his devotees

and give timely fortitude to them, rescue them and give refuge at his feet. Thus he was always ready to act for their welfare.

39. An episode which will illustrate what is said above follows, which will please you who are keen to hear it. It will give joy of being in the company of Sai and strengthen the faith of the devotees.

40. It matters not how fallen, deprived or ignorant a man is. If he develops love for listening to the stories of Sai and chants his name continuously, Sai will take him across the ocean of existence.

41. Kakasaheb Mirikar, who hailed from Ahmednagar, had been bestowed the title of *Sardar* by the Government, as it was pleased with him.

42. His son was a conscientious worker and Mamlatdar of Kopergaon. While he was on an official tour of Chithali[4], he came to Shirdi to have *darshan*.

43. He went and sat in the *Masjid*, and bowed down at Baba's feet. They chatted, making formal inquiries about health and general welfare.

44. A large group was present there, including Madhav Rao. Savour now the nectar of the wonderful story with rapt attention.

45. How the future difficulties were forecast; how he took measures to avoid them; how he protected the devotees – all these deeds of Baba are indeed amazing!

46. At that time Baba asked Mirikar a curious question: "Oh, this is our Dwarkamayi. Do you know it?"

47. Balasaheb did not understand that question at all. Baba said: "Now look! This is our Dwarkamayi.

48. "This is our Dwarkamayi! When sitting in the lap of the *Masjid*, she safeguards the children and there will never be any question of worrying.

49. "This *Masjidmai* is very kind. She is the Mother of all the innocent and faithfull devotees. Anyone may face any difficulty, She will readily protect.

50. "Once a person settles in her lap, all his difficulties are solved. He who lies in her shadow, he will be on the throne of happiness.

51. "This is that Dwarka, Dwaravati!" Then Baba gave him *udi* and kept his protective hand on his head, after which Mirikar got up to leave.

52. "Baba again thought of putting a question to Mirikar: "Do you know the long 'bava' (serpent) and its mysterious powers?"

53. Then he closed his fist and took his left arm near the elbow of his right arm, and holding it moved it around and said: "He is terrible like this!

54. "But what can he do to us? We are Dwarkamayi's offsprings. Nobody can comprehend her activities. Just quietly watch her wonders.

55. "When Dwarkamayi is there to protect, how can the long 'bava' dare to attack? The strength of the attacker is not comparable to that of the saviour? How can it be explained!"

56. Why should Baba explain this, at this point of time? And how was Mirikar connected with it? Everybody was curious to know.

Balasaheb Mirikar

57. He did not have the courage to ask Baba. Therefore, he put down his head at his feet, and saying that he was getting late to go to Chithali, he climbed down the steps.

58. Madhav Rao was also with him. As soon as both of them reached the gate of the courtyard, Baba called Madhav Rao back, saying "Come back here, for a moment".

59. "Shama, you too get ready and go with him. Do a tour of Chithali. You will greatly enjoy it".

60. "Immediately, Shama climbed down and came up to Mirikar. He said: "I want to come with you in your *tonga* to Chithali.

61. I will go home, make arrangements and will be back in a trice. Baba says that I should go along with you to Chithali."

62. Mirikar said to him: "What will you do coming so far off upto Chithali? It will be an unnecessary trouble for you".

63. Madhav Rao came back and told Baba what had taken place. Baba said: "Alright! What have you to lose?

64. "*Mantra, tirth, brahmin,* God, astrologer, doctor or the Guru – in case of all of them, the gain is in proportion to the faith that you have in them.

65. "We should always wish for the best and give suitable advice. Even then, what is destined will happen".

66. But now Mirikar began to doubt his decision and thought that he should obey Baba's words. Therefore, he quietly made a sign to Madhav Rao and asked him to go with him to Chithali.

67. But Madhav Rao said: "Wait. I will come. I will take Baba's permission again. If he says yes, I will return instantly. I will quickly come back.

68. "I had started to go with you but you made me go back. Then Baba said 'alright! What have you to lose?' and he made me sit quietly.
69. "Now I must consult him again. If he says yes, I will come immediatley. I will do exactly as he says. I am only his obedient servant".
70. Then he went to Baba and said that Mirikar was inviting him to go with him to Chithali and is asking your permission.
71. Sai smilingly said: "Alright, if he is taking you, you may go. Her name is *Masjidmayi*. She will never let her reputation suffer.
72. "After all, a mother is a mother. Very loving and very compassionate towards her children. But if the children turn out untrusting, how can she then take care of them?"
73. Then bowing down at Sai's feet, Madhav Rao set out and went where Mirikar was waiting to sit in the *tonga*.
74. Both of them went to Chithali, and on inquiry found out that some higher officials, who were to come, had not yet come. So they waited quietly.
75. There was a place to stay at the Maruti Temple. Therefore, both of them immediately proceeded to that place.
76. The night advanced and it was about ten o'clock. Spreading out their cotton carpets, beddings and pillows, they sat chatting in the light of the lamp.
77. There was a newspaper lying about. Mirikar opened it and started to read. He got absorbed in a certain piece of news. Then a strange thing occurred.
78. At that evil time, a snake came no one knew from where, coiled itself and settled down without anybody's knowledge.
79. It sat quietly and peacefully on one end of Mirikar's soft *uparna*, which was lying on his waist.
80. When it had quietly entered, the sound it must have made was absorbed by the rustling noise of the newspaper. Therefore, nobody had any suspicions of the serpent.
81. Altough the situation was so tense, Mirikar was oblivious to this being engrossed in the news. But his peon's imagination ran wild.
82. 'From where is the noise coming? What kind of noise is this and what is the cause?' the peon thinking thus, he lifted the lamp a little and lo! he saw the *long Maharaj* (snake) !
83. As soon as be saw it, he was frightened; and he called out softly: "snake, a snake"! Then Mirikar lost his composure and he shivered all over.

84. Shamrao was also amazed. He said to himself: 'Baba, what have you done? From where have you sent this difficulty? Now, you must remove it yourself.'

85. Then, under the circumstances, everybody armed himself with whatever was handy and moved forward stealthily.

86. By that time, the serpent which was resting below the waist, was seen quietly moving away. Oh, but not a serpent! It looked like death personified was approaching.

87. Then in no time the calamity was arrested. And the clubs and other weapons, which were already ready to strike, fell forcefully on the serpent and it was done to pieces.

88. In this way, the danger passed. Having witnessed this, Mirikar choked with emotion and his love for Sai Samartha was strengthened all the more and overflowed.

89. Goose pimples, which had appeared due to fright, subsided. Tears of love flowed from his eyes. He wondered as to how the calamity was warded off and how Baba came to know of it.

90. 'How did this fatal calamity miss me? How did Baba give me timely warning? Even though I had refused, Shama was made to sit in the *tonga* to help me.

91. What kindness of heart! How omniscient he is! How sweetly and greatly did he warn me about this evil event!

92. He pointed out the importance of *darshan*, asserted the power of the *Masjid*, revealed his own love for the devotee, by a simple act.'

93. Once, a famous astrologer whose name was Nana Dengle was with Shrimant Butti. Listen to what he said to him.

94. "To-day is a very inauspicious day. Some calamity is to befall you. Have courage but be very careful".

95. After Dengle had said this, Bapusaheb was restless. He kept worrying all the time and time dragged heavily.

96. Later on, the whole group went to the *Masjid* at the usual time. Bapusaheb, Nana and all others went along and sat with Baba.

97. Immediately Baba asked Butti: "Well what does this Nana say? Does he predict your death? You have nothing to fear.

98. Retort to him without any hesitation. 'You can kill me if you dare to!' After this, now watch what miracle happened.

99. In the evening, Bapusaheb went outside to the toilet to ease himself; and, in the toilet there came a snake, at that time.

100. Looking at that terrible creature, Bapusaheb came out, while Lahnoo, his servant, thought of killing it with a stone.

101. Lahnoo tried to pick up a stone. Bapusaheb objected. He said: "Go bring a stick. It is not right to do this kind of work hastily".

102. When the servant left to get the stick, the snake began to climb the wall, suddenly lost its balance and fell down. Then he crept away through a hole.

103. From there, it escaped and there remained no reason to kill it. The incidence reminded him of Baba's words and, as it were, the ordeal was over for both – the serpent and him.

104. Be it so. For him, who has by good fortune witnessed the pleasure of Sai's company, it is a source of joy for ever and it is impossible to forget.

105. By making the devotees undergo such and similar experiences, he has attracted the hearts of his devotees; and to describe them in words, it would be always inadequate[5].

106. Here is another similar story. At about midnight, it happened in the *Chavadi*, before Baba. Please listen to that.

107. A certain Amir Shakkar, owning ancestral land at Korale, in Kopergaon Taluka had faith in Sai.

108. By caste he was a butcher and by occupation he was a broker. He was well-known in Bandra. He was greatly suffering from a disease, which had terribly affected his limbs.

109. Difficulties remind one of God. He left the toils and troubles of business; wound up everything and hastened to Shirdi.

110. Kunti, the mother of the five Pandavas, had to undergo all kinds of sufferings – to reside in a jungle for years incognito. But in spite of all her difficulties, she asked for 'misery' as a 'boon' from God!

111. She said: "O' God Almighty! You may give happiness to those who ask for it; but give me continuous suffering always. Let me never forget your name.

112. "O' God, this is my only request. If you want to grant me anything, give me only this, so that I may never forget your name. It will be like an ornament around my throat".

113. Listeners and this speaker, let us ask the same from Sai, day and night. "Let us not forget your name. Keep us at your feet".

114. So be it. Amir bowed down and kissed Baba's hand with the proper ritual. He related in detail about his disease and prayed for relief from his suffering.

115. He asked for protection against rheumatism to which Baba answered: "Go and live happily in the *Chavadi*".

116. From the *Masjid*, Baba used to go to the *Chavadi* every alternate night regularly; and Amir started to live there.

117. Amir was suffering from pains in the joints. Therefore, he would have been comfortable at any other place in the village, or he could have even gone to Korale which would have been more agreeable to him.

118. But the *Chavadi* was an old and dilapidated building. The floor was uneven where chameleons, lizards, scorpions and snakes roamed freely.

119. Besides, lepers and other diseased persons lived there. Dogs roamed around eating left-over food. Amir was very troubled but he couldn't say anything to Baba.

120. At the rear side, there was a knee-deep heap of garbage. There were a number of burrows (made by serpents and scorpions) in the backyard. He was in a wretched condition and it was a real ordeal of a lifetime for him.

121. It rained from above and below the ground was wet. The place was uneven. Cold breezes blew through it. Amir was very worried.

122. All the joints in his body were stiff. The place was wet and windy. It was an extremely wet place. But Baba's words served as the medicine.

123. Rain, wind or wet; the ground rough, uneven, or pitted – all this was not to be considered, as Baba had told him to live there.

124. Although that place was questionable and unfit to live in, Sai's presence and company were a great boon. He stayed on happily thinking those words to be his medicine.

125. Amir Shakkar lived at the *Chavadi* for nine months. Just as one climbed the steps into the *Chavadi*, right in front, he spread out his bedding in the middle of the room.

126. Rheumatism had totally gripped his body. Seemingly, the antidote was also adverse. But in his heart he had true faith; therefore, everything smoothened out.

127. Amir was asked to live there for nine months and was prohibited from coming for *darshan* even in the *Masjid*.

128. But that *Chavadi* which was allotted to him to stay was such a place that without any effort it was possible to have Baba's *darshan*.

129. That too, every day, both in the morning and evening. Besides, on

alternate days, at both the times[6], he would witness the celebrations at the *Chavadi* to his heart's content.

130. Every day in the morning, when Baba went to beg alms, Baba passed the *Chavadi*, on his way. It was easily possible for Amir to have *darshan* when Baba went or returned, without leaving his place.

131. Also, at sunset, Baba would come in front of the *Chavadi*, and would pay homage to all the directions bowing his head and moving his index finger.

132. From there he would turn back and walk upto the corner of the *Samadhi* building and from here he turned back to the *masjid*, accompanied by his devotees.

133. He came to the *Chavadi* every other day and there was only a curtain between them for name's sake – actually, a wooden shutter – thus they were able to converse. And both loved to talk.

134. *Puja* and *arati* would take place there only, after which the devotees would disperse for their respective homes; and the two of them would get the opportunity to talk peacefully.

135. Seemingly it was an imprisonment. But, in reality, he enjoyed Sai's company fully. Without good fortune no one else could have this rare opportunity.

136. Yet, Amir got fed up of staying only at one place. He felt it was an imprisonment and thought of going away to some other place.

137. He who is fond of independence, can he like bondage? 'Enough of this confinement' thought Amir.

138. He left his allotted abode, without Baba's permission and went to Kopergaon and stayed in a *dharamshala*.

139. See, what a curious incident happened there! A fakir, who was dying, was lying there. Distressed by extreme thirst, he said: "Give me a mouthful of water".

140. Amir felt pity. He gave him water to drink. But as soon as the fakir drank it, he fell down lifeless.

141. He died. There was nobody in the vicinity and it was also night time. Amir became nervous.

142. He thought that, in the morning, an official inquiry would take place about this sudden death. They'll start rounding up people and the Government will inquire into it.

143. 'Who is going to believe when I tell them what really happened? The outcome will be dependent on witnesses and findings. Such is the legal process.

144. "If I tell the truth that when I gave him water to drink, the fakir died suddenly after that, then I will be walking into their net.

145. "I will be the first person who will be caught, in this connection. Later on, when the real cause of the death is discovered, I will be proved to be innocent.

146. "But until that is decided what torture will I have to go through! Therefore, I should run back the same way as I have come, immediately'. He decided that.

147. Therefore, Amir, quit the place the same night before anyone could see him. As he walked, he kept looking backwards. All the way he was in a disturbed state of mind.

148. 'How will I reach the *Chavadi*?' His mind was not free of fear. Amir had such doubts, as he walked towards Shirdi.

149. 'O, Baba! What have I done? How have I drawn this burden upon me? My own actions have brought these fruits. I have understood this fully.

150. "I left the *Chavadi* in the hope of finding a better place. Therefore, you have taught me a lesson. So be it. Now take me out of this predicament and see that I reach Shirdi'.

151. Thus he got himself ready and Amir left in the night itself, leaving the corpse behind in the *dharamshala*.

152. "Baba, Baba", he said, "Please pardon me. Have mercy." He walked petitioning all the way till he reached the *Chavadi*. He then got relief.

153. In this way, Amir learnt a lesson and took an oath to behave himself. Later, Amir behaved well and gave up the wrong and crooked path.

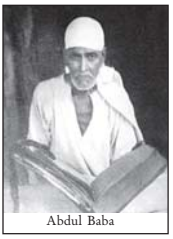
154. So be it. His faith bore fruit and he was cured of his rheumatism. Now listen to what incident took place later on.

155. The *Chavadi* was divided into three parts. Baba's corner was in the south east. He slept in a place covered on all four sides by wooden planks.

156. Lamps burnt there the whole night. He slept always in the light, throughout the night. Fakirs and others used to sit outside, where it would be dark.

157. Amir was one of them. Around him there were other people, who also lay down there. There were so many, like these.

158. There, behind Baba's living quarters, was a store-room in which a devotee called Abdul, a very detached person, lived. He was always ready to serve Baba.


Abdul Baba

159. This is how it was. Once, at midnight, Baba cried out to Abdullah and said: "Look, I have found a ghostly creature near my bed".

160. He went on calling him repeatedly. Abdul came running with a lamp in his hand. Baba loudly said to him: "Wasn't she here just now?!"

161. Abdul said: "I have looked everywhere. There is nothing that I see here." Baba said: "Open your eyes and look carefully everywhere".

162. Abdul searched everywhere again and again. Baba kept hitting the ground with the *satka*. The people who slept outside awoke and began watching.

163. Amir Shakkar also woke up. He wondered: 'What is all this commotion to-day? Why is there so much noise of the *satka* in the middle of the night?'

164. Seeing Baba's actions, Amir was immediately scared and thought that a snake had entered somewhere and Baba was aware of it.

165. He had a long experience of Baba. He knew Baba's nature and his manner of speaking. Therefore, he understood this fully.

166. If there was any danger to a devotee, Baba would say that it affected him. Amir was aware of this kind of speech. Therefore, he had come to this conclusion.

167. Just then, he saw something moving near his own pillow. "Abdul, bring the lamp, the lamp here", Amir shouted.

168. When the lamp was brought outside, a large serpent was seen coiled there. He was dazzled by the light and he began to move his hood up and down.

169. It was killed immediately. He felt very grateful to Baba, and thought how extraordinary this method was of making us aware.

170. That mention of the ghost and calling for the lamp was only a kind of trick to caution the devotees of the danger and to save them from the calamity.

171. There are a number of such stories about serpents in Baba's biography which could be described. But then the book would become very voluminous. Therefore, I have to curtail them.

172. "Snakes and serpents are Narayan, but they should be worshipped from a distance", says Saint Tukaram.

173. He calls them wicked and deserving of a beating with a shoe. However, the opinion is not unanimous and one is left in doubt as to the mode of one's treatment of them.

174. One acts according to one's nature and in keeping with God's will. This is the essence of it all.

175. There is only one answer to this question. All beings are equal and non-violence is always the best. Baba, too, had the same explanation.

176. Whether it be a scorpion or a snake, God is within them too. If He does not wish to harm, no harm will be done by them.

177. The whole universe is under the command of God. Nothing here is independent. This is Baba's knowledge through experience. But we cannot accept that because of our ego.

178. Once a scorpion fell into a pond. As he was drowning and heading to the bottom, a man happily clapped and said: "Oh, you likewise harm us!"

179. Another, hearing the clapping, came running to the bank of the pond and saw the scorpion bobbing up and down, while drowning. He was moved and took pity on him.

180. He went near it and picked up the scorpion between his fingers. But the scorpion, according to its nature, jumped up and stung his fingers.

181. In such a case, our knowledge is limited. We are entirely slaves of destiny (God) who bestows us with intelligence. Everything that takes place in our lives is according to His wish.

182. Different people have varied experiences. I will also tell my own experience. Sai's words are the authority for my faith and my faith is my glory.

183. Just as Kakasaheb Dixit read the *Nath Bhagvat* in the day, every night he read the *Bhavarth Ramayan* (by Eknath).

184. It was so regular that sometimes even the offering of flowers to God could be missed, or he could miss other customary duties or neglect his bath; but the time which he himself had alloted for reading them was always adhered.

185. Both these books, written by Eknath, contained the essence of divine knowledge. Dixit thought them to be Sai *Samaratha's* blessing to him.

186. In these two unique books, which were also very appealing, the knowledge of self, non-attachment and practice of ethics – these three qualities – continued to form the three-fold wick of flame, which shone with divine light.

187. He who has sipped from the cup, containing the nectar of the preachings of these books, is fortunate. He overcomes the three-

fold difficulties of the material world at the same time, and reaches the ultimate (*moksha*).

188. By Sai's Grace, Dixit needed a listener and I got the opportunity to listen to the *Bhagvat* and was thus obliged.

189. I began to attend the sessions, day and night, due to good fortune, which purified my ears.

190. So be it. One night when the reading was in progress on the pious stories, an incident occurred. Listeners should listen to that story, which is a digression.

191. Well, how can I help it? I am inspired by something else while describing another. But why should I ignore something which I know to be interesting.

192. An interesting story from the *Ramayana* was being narrated about Hanuman who, on his mother's instructions, tried to test his master's powers and ended by experiencing terrible miseries.

193. When Hanuman was caught in the cyclonic winds which were created by the feathers of Ram's arrows and went round and round in the sky, he was scared to death. At that time his father (*Vayu*) came to his rescue.

194. Listening to his father's advice, Hanuman surrendered to Ram. While this part was being narrated, something amazing took place. Listen to it.

195. Our mind was engrossed in the story. Each one was involved in the delight of listening when a scorpion, incarnation of death, appeared, God only knows from where!

196. I do not know how he got fond of the narration and without my knowledge he jumped onto my shoulder and settled himself down, enjoying the sentiments of the story.

197. Look! Here too Baba was alert. I was not aware of its presence. But God protects those who love His stories.

198. I looked casually and saw a terrible scorpion, calmly perched on my right shoulder, on the *uparna*.

199. He did not move at all and was quietly paying attention, as a very attentive listener would, and was seated peacefully on his seat.

200. If, as was his nature, he had moved its sting just a little bit, he would not have allowed me to enjoy the freedom and peace and would have given me unbearable pain.

201. The story from the *Ramayana* was in full swing. The speaker and the listeners were engrossed in the story – all this would have been

spoilt. Such was the ominous companion, whose seizure was difficult and a dilemma.

202. This is the greatness of the story of Ram. No possible obstacles can be more powerful than it. They have to become repentant and forget their innate nature.

203. By the grace of Ram, I was endowed with intelligence. I could ward off the difficulty quietly. One should not depend till the last moment on this creature of unsteady nature.

204. That *uparna* with which I had covered myself, I gathered cautiously from two sides, folded the scorpion in it tightly, took it out to the garden and spread it out there.

205. The scorpion is naturally a terrible creature. Given the opportunity, it could have shown its nature. I was truly afraid. But Baba's strict orders could not be overlooked. I could not raise my hand to kill it.

206. Here the listeners will naturally have a doubt. Isn't the scorpion a deadly creature? Doesn't it deserve to be killed? Will it give pleasure if it stings? Then, why should it not be killed? But nothing is clear.

207. Snakes, scorpions and other venemous creature – can anyone afford to neglect? Would Baba ask to release them?

208. The listeners' doubt is correct. I too had the same apprehension. But, listen to Baba's words, on the occasion of a similar incident, in the past.

209. The situation was more serious than this. In Shirdi itself, at Kaka's house, in a room on the upper storey, near the window, a poisonous snake was seen.

210. It had entered through a hole in the window frame and was dazzled by the light of the lamp. It was sitting coiled near it.

211. Though it was dazzled by the lamp light, it had got startled because of the movements of the people around. When there was a commotion, it was stunned and remained steady for a while.

212. It neither went back nor did it come forward but moved its hood up and down. The most urgent thought of the moment was how to kill it.

213. Some got clubs and some got sticks hurriedly but they found the place difficult for manoeuvre. They were greatly worried.

214. If it had crawled a little farther, and climbed down the wall to the floor, it would have reached my bedding first, and it could have had catastrophic consequences.

215. A hit in a vital spot could kill it. But if the fatal stroke missed, it would take vengeance and bring calamity. Therefore, a lamp was brought and aimed at him. Then, he found a way to escape.

216. However, its hour of death had not yet come and our luck was also strong. It was a precarious moment, but Baba protected all of us.

217. It slithered back through the place from where it had entered. It was free from fear and everybody else had nothing to fear anymore. In this way, we were mutually happy.

218. Then Muktaram, a devotee, got up and said: "It is good that the poor thing has escaped. If it had not slipped away through the hole, it would have lost its life".

219. When I saw Muktaram's outlook of kindness, I felt hurt and thought to myself: 'What is the use of compassion for dangerous creatures? How will the world go on otherwise?'

220. Muktaram seldom came; but we used to be there morning and evening. Besides, my bedding was placed near the window. So I did not like those words.

221. He initiated the argument while I took the diametrically opposite view. A big argument took place but no conclusion was reached.

222. One said that a snake should be killed without a moment's delay; the other said why should we unnecessarily be enemical to an innocent being.

223. Some condemned Muktaram; and some supported me. The argument warmed up and there was no end to it.

224. Finally Muktaram went downstairs. I changed my (sleeping) place. I inserted a wooden piece into the hole and then spread out my bedding to go to sleep.

225. Eyes became drowsy and the assembled people went to sleep. I started yawning and the argument naturally ended.

226. The night passed and it was morning. I finished my morning ablutions. Baba returned from the Lendi. People started gathering in the *Masjid*.

227. As was customary, in the early morning I came into the *Masjid* at the usual time. Muktaram and others, too, came and took their seats.

228. Some were crushing the tobacco in their palms; some were filling Baba's chillum; some were pressing his hands and feet. Thus all were busy serving him.

229. Baba, who was aware of everyone's innermost thoughts, softly asked: "What was the discussion that took place, last night, in the *wada*?"

230. Then I told Baba everything that had transpired; and asked whether a snake should be killed or not, under such circumstances.

231. But Baba maintained just one thing – that God is present even in serpents and scorpions, and in all beings. Therefore, we should love all.

232. God holds the reins of the world. All are under His command. Whether it be a snake or a scorpion, it cannot act against His Will.

233. Therefore, we should be kind to all living things and love them. Give up violence and have patience. God protects every one.

234. How many such stories of Sai Baba could be narrated? Therefore, the listeners should certainly gather the essence.

235. The next chapter is even sweeter than this one. It is about an incident where devotion and faith combined in one person, the devotee Dixit; and how, with the strength of these, he readied to kill a goat.

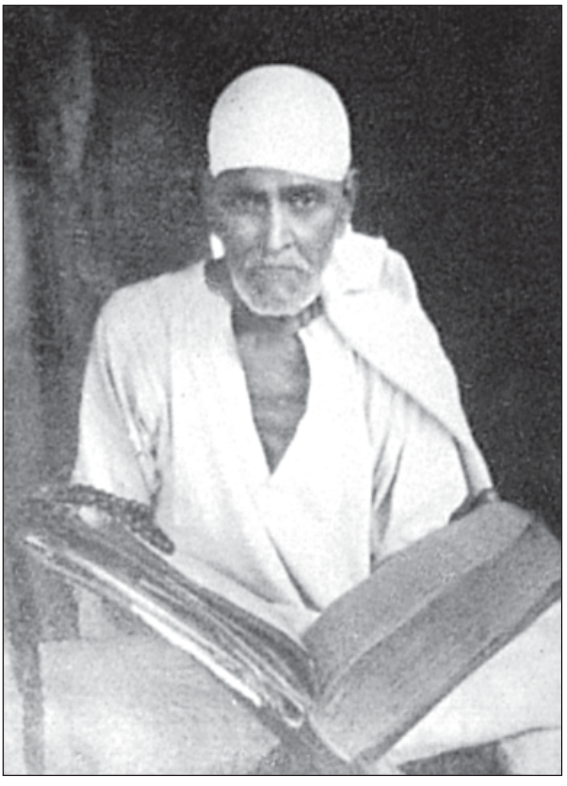
May there be well-being. This is the end of the twenty-second chapter of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people called "Warding Off of Untimely Death."

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Vishnu/Krishna.
2. Details are given in Chapter 4.
3. Used for drawing water from the well, by use of bullocks to irrigate the fields.
4. It is at a distance of 13 miles by train from Shirdi.
5. Once, a snake bit this Madhavrao Deshpande when he was in Shirdi. Nearby there is a shrine of Vitroba, to which people bitten by snakes were taken to be cured, as per the belief and experience of the people. Accordingly, a number of people urged him to go there, he replied: "We will act as Maharaj directs" and went to Maharaj. When Madhavrao was below the steps, Maharaj loudly directed "Do not climb up." Believing this to be a direction to him, Madhavrao did not climb up the steps. But this directive was not to him but to the poison, it seems, for the poison no longer spread from that moment onwards. Then later, Madhavrao slowly recovered by Maharaj's Grace, without any remedies. He had a vision of this incident, a year before it actually happened.
6. The night *arati* at the *Chavadi* and the next morning's *kakad arati*, when Baba went to sleep there on alternate nights.



Abdul Baba

There, behind Baba's living quarters, was a store-room in which a devotee called Abdul, a very detached person, lived. He was always ready to serve Baba. (Ch.22 , ovi 158)

23

The Spectacle of the Leela of Guru and Disciple

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. In essence, man is beyond the three '*gunas*', but deluded by '*maya*' he forgets his truth – pure consciousness – bliss state and considers himself to be the body.
2. Then because of the pride of the body, he believes in doership and enjoyership. He gets entangled in miseries, one after the other, and finds no way to escape.
3. A loving and devoted attachment to the Guru's feet is the only way to ward off the endless miseries. Sai, Sree Rang[1], is a great actor and dyes the devotees in his own hues.
4. We consider him as an *avatar*, since he had all the attributes of one. But, he himself always said: "I am a slave, at the feet of Allah".
5. Inspite of being an *avatar* himself, he lived like an ordinary man of the world, thus setting an example to others to conform to their castes and creeds.
6. He did not compare himself to anyone and did not allow anyone to do it also. Humility is the true ornament of one who considers the whole universe filled with God.
7. He did not despise anyone nor considered anyone insignificant. For him each and every object was God. He saw pure consciousness in all.
8. He never said: "I am God"; but "I am a humble servant of God". "I always remember God". He regularly chanted: "God is the Owner". (Allah Malik).
9. We cannot know the state of any saint or his tradition from how he behaves and what he eats. He is beyond all this.

10. By the Grace of that All Merciful Lord, the obliging saints manifest on this earth to uplift the movable and immovable beings.
11. Only a store of merits in the previous life will create an interest and love for listening to the stories of saints, to obtain happiness and contentment.
12. Once a *sadhak* of yoga, accompanied by Chandorkar, arrived at the *masjid* to have Baba's *darshan*.
13. He had studied Patanjali's *Yoga Shastra* and others, in their entirety, but his experience strangely enough was such that he could not attain *samadhi*, even for a moment.
14. 'Maharaj Sai is the Lord of Yoga. If he graces me my doubts will be resolved, and I will definitely attain *samadhi*.'
15. With this desire in his mind, when he was taking Sai's *darshan*, he saw him seated, eating *bhakri* with onion[2].
16. Seeing him with stale *bhakri* and dry onion, held in front of his mouth, a strong doubt arose: 'How can he clear my doubts?'
17. When such a notion arose in his mind, Sai Maharaj, the Knower of All hearts said: "Nana, only those who can digest onion should eat it.
18. "One who has the capacity to digest it, he can eat onion safely". Hearing this, the yogi was startled and, from within, completely surrendered with full faith.
19. So be it. Later that *sadhak* of yoga came and sat near Baba, without any doubts in his mind, when Baba came and occupied his seat.
20. He prudently asked questions, got his doubts cleared and was satisfied. After getting *udi* and blessings, he returned with a happy mind.
21. There are many such stories. If listened to with faith and devotion, they have the power to remove sorrow, greed and other overwhelming calamities of the devotee immediately.
22. A pig finds a small puddle, filled with tremendously foul smelling water, an overwhelming pleasure.
23. The Atman of a human being and the parrot have the same thing in common. One is bound in the body while the other is imprisoned in a cage. Though the parrot has lost its freedom, he is quite happy in captivity.
24. The parrot is like a frog in a well. Its happiness is within the cage. A man caught in the web of desires is like this parrot who has forgotten the wonders of freedom.

25. 'How beautiful is my cage and the golden bar for swinging in it! Even if I hang upside down, I am fine if my foot does not slip!
26. "But outside one has to wash one's hands off the happiness of eating pomegranate seeds and delicious red chillies. I will myself be responsible for losing these pleasures.'
27. When the opportune time comes for the parrot, the improbable occurs. That gives it a loving awakening (by a slap) and applies the collyrium (of knowledge) to its eyes.
28. The awakening by the *shaktipat* [3] causes the eyes to open and it gets out of the cage. It uses its wings to fly. Who will then control it?
29. The vast universe is before him. There are plenty of orchards of pomegranates and guavas. The sky is free for him to fly wherever he desires, rejoicing in his freedom.
30. Similar is the state of this *Atman*. When he gets God's grace and a Guru, with the help of both he gets a release and experiences the joys of freedom.
31. Now, all you devoted listeners become attentive and listen for some moments to an interesting story of pure love.
32. In the last chapter, Baba showed a miracle by sending Shama with Mirikar, on his tour to Chithali.
33. Sai, knowing the future, about the trouble from a snake, alerted Mirikar by giving him a timely warning about the difficulty.
34. Not only did he warn him but provided the means to avert the danger by forcing Shama's company, inspite of his disinclination, and protected Mirikar from the danger.
35. Baba, ever-ready for the welfare of the devotees, saved Balasaheb Mirikar from the calamity and gave him a wonderful experience.
36. Compared to that, see Shama's state! He was unexpectedly bitten by a snake and there was no hope for his life. Baba saved him from that.
37. This was also a *leela* of Baba! I shall narrate it first to the listeners. Though a snake had bitten, see what remedy was used!
38. Around seven o'clock, a snake suddenly bit the small finger (of Shama) and that part became full of poison.
39. The pain was excruciating and life seemed to be ebbing out. Madhavrao was frightened and worried.
40. His body turned red. Friends and relations gathered and said : "Let us go to Viroba" [4], losing hope of his survival.

Madhavrao Deshpande alias Shyama

Nanasaheb Nimonkar

41. Nimonkar,[5] also, came forward and said that he should take *udi* and go. But Madhavrao ran to the *Masjid*. See what Baba did!
42. No sooner than Baba saw him, see Baba's *leela*! He started profusely abusing and did not permit him to come up.
43. "Do not climb up, vile priest! Don't you dare to climb! Get out! Get down!" was the long-drawn shout.
44. Baba got angry beyond imagination, flaring up unnecessarily and unexpectedly. Madhavrao was amazed. Why was he being punished with these strong words?
45. Seeing this state of affairs, Madhavrao was greatly frightened. He could think of nothing. He sat down, dejected.
46. When even *Deva*[6] was angry, Madhavrao felt scared and believed that there was no hope when Baba had repulsed him.
47. Who would not be terrified seeing the fury and the dreadful behaviour? Hearing the assault of abusive words, he thought that it was a dreadful time.
48. 'This *Masjid* is my mother's home. I am Sai's own child. This being so, why is the mother so furious with the child to-day?
49. Who can I turn to, with the grievance that a snake has bitten me, if not to my mother? But when she herself kicks, pitiable is my countenance.'
50. As a child is to the mother, so was Madhavrao to Baba. When such a relationship always existed, why should it happen this way to-day?
51. When the mother kicks who will take care of the child? Madhavrao lost all hope of survival, at that time.
52. After some time, when Baba was composed Madhavrao gathered courage, went up and sat.
53. Baba said : "Do not forsake fortitude. Do not let any despondency enter your heart. You will get well. Do not worry. The kind Fakir will take care of you.
54. Go home and sit quietly. Do not go out of the house. Be fearless and free from anxiety. Have faith in me".
55. Then, when he had barely reached home, Baba sent Tatya[7] to inquire and with a message.
56. "Tell him not to lie down or sleep, but move about in the house. Let him eat whatever he likes. Just follow these instructions."

57. Baba also told Kakasaheb Dixit that night: "He will feel sleepy at night. Do not allow him to sleep".
58. So be it. By taking all these precautions, the suffering disappeared, though some burning sensation remained in the finger, due to the poison.
59. Later on, that too was cured. Such a terrible ordeal was averted. How compassionate is Mother Sai, always moved by kindness for the devotees!
60. "Do not climb up, vile priest" such strong words from Baba, were they meant or addressed to Madhavrao?
61. No. They were not for Madhavrao. Those words were a severe command given to the poison of the snake who had bitten him.
62. "Don't you dare to climb" was the powerfully potent command from Sai's mouth which stopped the spread of the poison and restricted it at one place.
63. Not only that but "Get out! Get down", was the five-lettered mantra of Sai, which made the poison recede immediately.
64. There was no need of any other means, such as a person well-versed in *mantra* or a mystic. Such was Sai, the support of the devotees! He removed calamities instantly.
65. He did not use any incantation. Nor did he use charged rice or sprinkled holy water, then how did the poison recede?
66. Is it not a miracle? Only the words of a saint were the measures to overcome the bite of a serpent for Madhavrao. There is no parallel to their grace.
67. Now for the story, indicated in the last chapter, which is interesting and marvellous. Listeners should hear it with rapt attention throughout.
68. This story is more marvellous than the one I narrated in the previous chapter. The listeners will be told how that Sai practises artfulness!
69. Listening to these interesting stories, makes an impression and stamps upon the mind the Guru's words. The doership of all acts – good, bad or non-action, will disappear. Faith will be establisheld at the Guru's feet.
70. In order to destroy *Maya*, the easiest of easy ways is to remember the image of Sai's feet in the heart. This is the means for salvation.
71. The fear of the worldly existence is very great. It is *Maya* that is responsible for this insurgence. By listening to the stories it will be annihilated and give permanent happiness.
72. Once when an epidemic of cholera spread in Shirdi, the villagers

were frightened. By consensus, it was proclaimed that all communication to and from the village be stopped.

73. The cholera epidemic was dreadful. The villagers were frightened. People from other places were not allowed to come in. All activities came to a standstill.

74. As long as the cholera deaths continued, it was decided not to kill any goat and not to allow any vehicle from outside to enter the village. Everyone was called upon to obey this.

75. Baba did not at all like this credulous behaviour of the villagers. According to him, these foolish ideas arose from the ignorance of the people.

76. On the one hand, the villagers took these decisions and Baba, on the other hand, defeated the purpose. Listen with respect how and by what means he did that.

77. The villagers faithfully obeyed the decision of the village elders. If anyone broke the regulation, even slightly, a fine had to be paid before he was let off.

78. Baba had no fear of the fine. He was always and at all times fearless. He was merged in God and was victorious over death.

79. During these days a cart from another village full of firewood arrived at the village border. This caused a problem and the people began to quarrel amongst themselves.

80. The villagers knew that there was a shortage of firewood. But disobeying the rule was improper. Therefore, everyone was agitated.

81. They turned to the cart driver and began to send back the cart. Baba came to know about this and promptly arrived at that spot.

82. He stood before the cart. This gave courage to the cart driver. The obstinacy of the villagers was broken and the cart was allowed inside the village border.

83. From there it was brought to the gate of the courtyard (of the *Masjid*). All the wood was stacked in the courtyard. But no one dared to open their lips or make a sound.

84. *Baba's dhuni* was kept burning, all the twentyfour hours in the *Masjid*, whether it be summer, winter, monsoon or spring.

85. How strange was Baba's determination! Just as the *Agnihotri* performed his *agnihotra*, similarly Baba's sacred *dhuni* remained lit in the *Masjid*, day and night.

86. In order to keep the *dhuni* lit, Baba bought bundles of wood and kept them stacked against one of the walls in the courtyard.

87. Remembering the time for the *bazar* (weekly day), Baba collected the wood. The neighbours too had their eyes on it, because of the inherent selfishness.

88. "Baba, there is no wood for the hearth and without the wood the hearth cannot be lit". He distributed the wood even to those selfish hypocrites, who spoke thus.

89. By nature, the selfish are wicked. The courtyard had no door. Therefore, they got an opportunity. The needy and the cunning were the same.

90. Baba was very obliging. How can his greatness be described! Though he outwardly appeared severe, he was very gentle within.

91. Indescribable is his greatness. Speech becomes humble and bows down at his feet and immerses in him.

92. He saw that the whole universe is pervaded by the Almighty. Bearing this in mind always, he never bore enmity towards anyone.

93. He alone pervades the whole creation, all the ten directions, in front and behind. He was pained by ill-will to anybody.

94. Though perfectly detached, he behaved like an ordinary householder to set an example to the people.

95. How indescribable is the humility of this great soul! Listening to it, one is surprised and one observes love for the devotees. This was the fulfilment for his *avatar*.

96. Tremendous was his love for the poor. He was very fond of children. There are thousands of examples of it, which I could go on and on recounting.

97. He never fasted nor practised any austerities. He made no efforts also to perform *Hatha yoga*. He never had any desire to eat delicacies and ate sparingly.

98. Going to the usual houses, he begged for coarse and dry food. These alms were his daily food. He did not crave for any particular thing.

99. He did not pander to his tongue, did not long for sweetmeats, and was perfectly content with whatever he received or did not receive.

100. This is how one should live. Just protect the body which is the means of achieving knowledge and salvation. Be ever humble.

101. One who had his quietude as his ornament, why does he need necklaces and garlands? Nor does he need sandalwood or sacred ashes, or ritualistic puja. Sree Sai is perfect *Brahman*.

102. This apologue is educative and purifying, which gives importance

to devotion. They who listen to it with attention will be released from the cycle of birth and death.

103. More and more as the devoted listener gets attached, then Sai's treasure-house opens. Those who are critical are unable to understand. But innocent and unpretentious devotees can lovingly enjoy.

104. Now to continue with another story. If the listeners concentrate, it will inspire love and tears of joy will fill the eyes.

105. How wonderful was Baba's intelligence and sagacity and his ways and means! One who knows the truth about true devotion gets an experience always.

106. This *Saicharita* is like drinking nectar. Listen to it attentively, concentrating on the feet of the Guru. Hear the continuation with attention.

107. This story is excellent like delicious food. The listener should not be in a hurry to savour it. The excellence of each item should be enjoyed fully, as a novelty.

108. Enough of the story of the cart. The story about the goat is still more strange. The listeners will be amazed and the devotees of the Guru will be delighted.

109. Once a strange thing happened. Somebody brought a goat, which looked feeble and on the point of death. People came to see it.

110. Sai *Mauli* protected those who had no owner or saviour. Those afflicted with disease, or rejected, or vexed found a haven at the *Masjid*.

111. Then at that time, Bade Baba[8] was near by. Baba said: "Offer it as a sacrifice. Kill it with one stroke".

112. How important Bade Baba was! His usual seat was on the right hand (of Baba). Baba smoked the chillum only after Bade Baba had partaken of it.

113. Bade Baba was that person without whom Baba did not take a step. If he did not eat anything, Baba did not partake of food.

114. Once, at the *Deepavali* festival, when all the delicacies had already been served and the people were seated at their places, Bade Baba took offence at something and left.

115. When Bade Baba did not join, Sai Baba refused the food. And when Sai Baba himself did not eat even a morsel, how could others eat?

116. As a result everyone had to wait. Bade Baba was found and brought

back. Then, when he joined with the diners, Baba partook of the food.

117. Now leaving aside the present story, I feel like telling the listeners a little more about Bade Baba. Do not consider it as a digression.

118. Bade Baba was Baba's guest. At the time when food was served, he waited in the courtyard for the call to be given for him.

119. People sat in two rows facing each other. Baba sat at the head in the centre and the place immediately next to Baba, on his left hand, was reserved for Bade Baba.

120. The food that was offered as *naivedya* was distributed in all the *thalis*. Then those thalis were arranged in rows. The diners sat at their own places, when it was time to eat.

121. Then Baba, with great respect, himself would call out in a loud voice "Bade Miyan". Then he quickly came up with a bow.

122. Why respect someone who is angry with food and in a huff without reason? Why honour so much he who insults food?

123. Yet this was practised by Baba himself when the people were gathered to show that it was not proper to eat without the guest having joined.

124. Baba never transgressed this code of conduct for the house-holder by which the difficulties of the devotees are avoided. He himself always practised it.

125. Fulfilment of desires and relief from calamities are obtained by 'worshipping the guest'. The path is sure to be beset with obstacles if this is ignored, so the wise ones always follow this rule.

126. A guest going away without food means the destruction of family, prosperity, cattle etc. If the guest goes hungry, it is a sure invitation to disaster.

127. Sai Samartha also gave him (Bade Baba) *dakshina* of Rs. 50/- daily. Baba accompanied him a hundred paces when he was going away.

128. When that Bade Baba was the first one to be asked to kill the goat, the excuse that came from his mouth was: "Why should it be unnecessarily killed?"

129. Madhavrao was there. Baba ordered him: "Shama, you at least bring a knife. We will cut the goat. Go now".

130. Madhavrao was a faithful devotee. He went to Radhakrishna Bai and brought a big knife and placed it before Baba.

131. Though Madhavrao was troubled about bringing the big knife, Baba would not have been satisfied in seeing him without the knife.

132. In the meanwhile, Radhakrishna learnt about this matter and recalled the big knife because she felt pity.

133. Then Madhavrao left to get another knife. He remained in the Wada, delaying his return, so that the killing would not have to be done at his hand.

134. Then to test Kaka's mind, Baba ordered him: "Go, you bring a big knife to cut. Let the goat be freed from its misery".

Kakasaheb Dixit

135. Kaka was pure gold. Though Baba knew this fully, unless he had tested him in public, it would not be believed.

136. Whether gold is pure or is of a low quality, shrewd people do not have faith on the spoken word till it is tested by rubbing it with a file.

137. For the diamond to achieve its lustre, it has to bear being beaten with a hammer. A stone has to bear the wounds of the chisel to reach the splendour of divinity.

138. Although Kaka was as precious as the talisman around the neck, how would others realise it? An assayer tests a diamond, by tying it with a thread and putting into the fire.

139. If one had doubts about the words of a saint, his efforts for achievement are unsuccessful. His words become meaningless, futile, fruitless chatter. Not even a bit of spiritual growth is gained.

140. One who respects the words of the Guru will achieve his welfare and the supreme goal of his life. But he who finds fault with them and thinks them vile, he is ruined.

141. One who is always ready to serve the Guru, respects and obeys the Guru's orders, he makes the Guru responsible for what is correct or incorrect in all respects.

142. He is the servant of the Guru's orders. He does not think independently. Always, obeying the orders of the Guru, he does not distinguish what is good or bad.

143. Mind should be engrossed in remembering Sai's name; the eyes should be fixed at the feet of Sai; the attitude should be of meditation on Sai – the whole being should be dedicated to Sai.

144. Even if a moment is lost between receiving the orders and executing them, that time also cannot be tolerated. This is a strange level of awareness!

145. Dixit was a man of pure heart. He was truthful, courageous,

unshakable as a rock in his determination. It did not even occur to him to question the righteousness of killing the goat.

146. The innocent goat would die; its soul would be in turmoil; his own reputation would be besmirched; and he would have committed a great sin.

147. These thoughts had no place in his mind. Disobedience of the order was a sin there. There was no greater merit than the fostering and protection of the order.

148. For one who believes in obeying the orders of the Guru, he gets uncommon inspiration and his natural kind heart is ready to kill.

149. Then he went to Sathe's *wada* and brought the instrument (to kill) as per the order. He got himself ready to kill the goat without the least hesitation.

150. Inspiration for heroism (bravery) is derived from obedience of the Guru's order. Hardening his heart he took hold of the weapon.

151. He was born in a pious Brahmin family, for whom *Ahimsa* was one of life's vows since birth. He was placed in this kind of a situation. How would his hand proceed?

152. He determined to undauntedly obey the Guru's order. But his heart was palpitating and his body was soaked in perspiration.

153. He, who could not hurt anyone physically, or mentally, or by his hard words, how could he use a weapon? This was a difficult situation.

154. For those who disregard the Guru's order, there is no alternative path. Even the earlier store of merits would be certainly nullified.

155. Complete obedience to the Guru is the greatest ornament amongst all adornments – a true sign of the good disciple. Disobedience is the greatest of sins.

156. Obey the Guru's order without a moment's delay. One who thinks and hesitates is no better than a luckless, hornless beast.

157. There is no need for an auspicious time to obey the order; no need to debate whether the order is good or bad; and whether the order should be executed immediately or later on. The one who is wise obeys instantly. Only an unfortunate person thinks up delaying tactics.

158. Then tucking in his *dhoti* with one hand and holding up the knife in the other, he folded up the sleeve of the hand that held the knife. He came forward where the goat was.

159. The villagers were surprised at this strange scene. They were well

aware of Kaka's tender loving nature and wondered where that kindness had disappeared.

160. Even a Muslim, non-vegetarian, like Fakir Baba felt pity for the goat and did not take up the weapon! Yet Kaka had got ready.

161. It is true that the heart of an extraordinary person is harder than granite[9] and more tender than a flower.

162. Then, he tightened his grip on the big knife, raised his hand and said: "Baba, shall I kill it? Just tell me once."

163. Truly speaking, a weapon is held only to protect the weak; and yet it was now raised above an innocent goat! But he had dedicated his life to serve the Guru. Therefore, he had no hesitation.

164. He wanted to kill it quickly. But pity arose in his heart and the big knife wavered. The hand would not descend.

165. "Come on, kill now, what are you waiting for?" Hearing this final order, he made a semi-circular turn for an effective strike.

166. He lifted his hand with the big knife. The last moments of the goat appeared to have arrived. But the Lord, being its protector, it received His mercy at that moment.

167. Now he would certainly strike! Seeing this, Mother Sai, knowing that it would be a calamity said: "Oh, let it be.

168. "Oh, Kaka, stop this. How cruel you are! Though you are a Brahmin, you are ready to kill! Have you no thought about this?"

169. Hearing this, he threw aside the big knife. The young and the old were surprised. The goat's life was spared. Devotion to the Guru had scaled the peak!

170. Then, Kaka, after throwing away the large knife said what? Pay attention: "Baba, your nectar-like words are the only *dharma* and laws in our life.

171. We have no other *dharma*. We have no shame. Obeying the Guru's order is our only creed. It is our *Veda* and *Shastra*.

172. To completely obey the Guru's order, that is the meaning of discipleship for a disciple. That is our jewel. Disobedience is the greatest sin.

173. We never consider the consequences of these actions whether they give pleasure or pain. Whatever is our fate will happen. God alone takes care.

174. We know only one thing. We should remember your name always, see nothing but your form with our eyes, and follow your every command, day and night.

175. Virtues or sin of killing or non-killing are meaningless to us. Our salvation is at the *Sadguru*'s feet. Why should we think of the reason behind the order? It is our duty to obey.

176. Where the Guru*'s* command is clear, the disciple who considers whether it is correct or not correct, proper or improper, he is degraded. I would consider him as having failed in the *seva* (Service) altogether.

177. Disobeying the order of the Guru is to cause the degradation of life; obeying the order of the Guru is the main plank of righteousness.

178. The mind should be always at the Guru*'s* feet, whether I live or die. We obey the order of the Guru. He alone knows the consequence or the end result.

179. We do not know fame or calamity. We do not know selfishness or the welfare of others. We only know to perform the work stated by the Guru. That is the goal of our life.

180. Compared to the Guru*'s* command, the precepts and prohibitions are like a fool's prattling! If one's only aim and duty is to follow the Guru's command, the disciple's problems are the concern of the Guru.

181. We are the slaves of your command. We do not think what is right or wrong. If need be, we would even sacrifice our life, but would obey the order of the Guru."

182. How can a naturally kind man become stone-hearted? What a Muslim dared not do, a Brahmin got ready to carry out!

183. Listeners will feel perturbed but this is the jugglery of the *Sadguru*. It will be understood immediately if you too take the path of obedience to the Guru.

184. Once you surrender to him and place full faith at his feet, then he worries about the disciple and the disciple has to make no effort.

185. There is no place for fear for him, once he has totally surrendered. That self-confidence alone would ferry him across life.

186. There are three kinds of disciples – the best, the middling and the base. I will briefly describe them without too many details.

187. Know that he is the best disciple, who anticipates a Guru*'s* desire, and on realising it, begins to carry it out without waiting for a specific order.

188. Know that he is the middling disciple, who obeys the Guru*'s* command, to its very letter, without any delay.

189. Know that he is the base disciple, who procrastinates carrying out the Guru's command, given repeatedly, and commits mistakes at every step.

190. Without the utmost renunciation, and the discrimination between the transitory and the eternal, how can the Guru's grace be his, even though he has spent his whole life with the Guru.

191. But God fulfils the desires of him who is inseparably attached to the feet of the Guru. He makes him steady and desireless quickly. He treats him like a relative.

192. The spiritual goal of life (*parmartha*) is certain for him who has the pure strength of faith, together with the powerful strength of knowledge, added to steadfast patience.

193. Then, there is no need for control of breath - ingoing and outgoing, *Hatha Yoga*, *Samadhi* or instruction for coming out of it. Those are difficult practices for us.

194. The *Sadguru* is ever ready to grant the fruits to the disciple provided the disciple is mature enough to receive them. Actually, he waits impatiently and eagerly for imparting them.

195. Only the faithful believers experience God with attributes. It arouses devotion in the devotees. Others will call them figments of their imagination.

196. Later, Baba said to Kaka: "Take this tin container of water in your hand. Now I will slaughter[10] it myself, and give it *Sadgati*".

197. The goat was half dead as it is. Fakir Baba had a timely thought that the *takiya*[11] was near by.

198. He asked Baba for his opinion if the goat should be killed at the *takiya*. Under this pretext, when the goat was being taken there, it died on the way.

199. Everyone knew that the goat's death was imminent, but at the opportune time Baba enacted this drama.

200. Those who surrender to the *Sadguru*, they attain oneness with the *Sadguru*. When rock salt enters the sea, for a bath, can it ever come out?

201. A living being enjoys the worldly experiences (good or bad) and God grants them to him. But *Sadguru* is the only One who grants salvation. He is the store of all the *atmas* which have oneness with him.

202. When the *Sadguru* is pleased, he grants us celestial perception, by which the whole creation is seen in one divine vision.

203. Hemad surrenders at Sai's feet, and offers his bodily pride there. He is alert and thinks: 'Baba make me humble'.

204. In the next two chapters, there will be a feast of jokes and pranks and how Maharaj Sai played them. Listen to that marvel.

205. Though it appears as a joke and an entertainment, it is full of wisdom. The pious devotee who analyses them will be extremely happy.

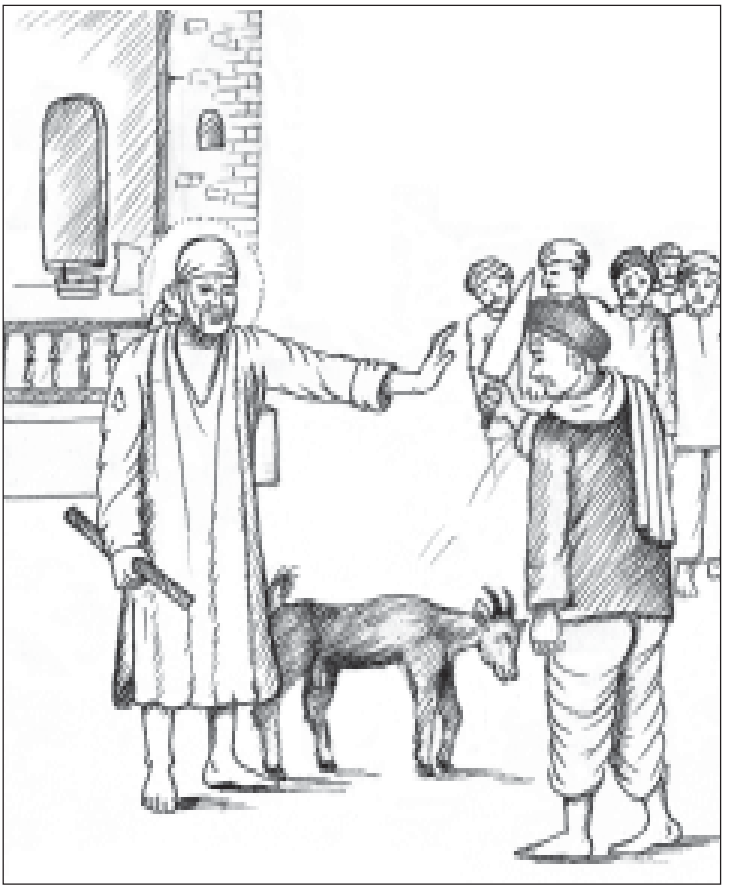
May there be well-being. This is the end of the twenty-third chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita,* written by the devotee Hemadpant impelled by Saints and virtuous people called "The Spectacle of the Leela of Guru and Disciple".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Krishna/Vishnu.
2. Onions are considered to be *tamasic*, creating laziness and dullardness. Therefore, for yoga *sadhana*, they are prohibited.
3. The power given by the Guru to his disciple through a *mantra*.
4. Viroba deity was another form of Shankar. When one is bitten by a snake, one is taken to Viroba's shrine, believing that he would get well.
5. Nanasaheb Nimonkar was Madhavrao's uncle and Hony. magistrate.
6. Madhavrao and the village folk, called Baba by the name 'Deva'.
7. Tatya Ganpat Patil Kote.
8. Fakir Peer Mohammed of Malegaon.
9. Alternatively, harder than the *Vajra*, Indra's weapon made from the thigh bone of Rishi Dadhichi.
10. Baba used the word *Halal* which means to kill sheep, fowls etc. according to the forms prescribed by the Mohammedan Law.
11. Place where the fakirs gathered.



Then to test Kaka's mind Baba ordered him: "Go, you bring a big knife to cut. Let the goat be freed from its misery". (Ch.23, ovi 134)

"Come on, kill now, what are you waiting for?" Hearing this final order, he made a semi-circular turn for an effective strike. (Ch.23, ovi 165)

"Oh, Kaka, stop this. How cruel you are! Though you are a Brahmin, you are ready to kill! Have you no thought about this?" (Ch.23, ovi 168)

Then, Kaka, after throwing away the large knife said what? Pay attention: "Baba, your nectar-like words are the only *dharma* and laws in our life. (Ch.23, ovi 170)

We have no other *dharma*. We have no shame. Obeying the Guru*'s* order is our only creed. It is our *Veda* and *Shastra*. (Ch.23, ovi 171)

24

Splendid Humour

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. In the last chapter, I promised that I shall narrate how Sree Sainath, the Cloud of Mercy, taught people in a jocular way, also.
2. The words "I shall narrate" denote egotism. One should surrender most humbly at the feet of the Guru. Only then the stream of the story will flow, for you to respectfully avail of it.
3. The *sadhus*, the virtuous, the great ones are always pure and without sins. They are clean and clear like an unclouded sky. They are pure and without blemish.
4. By worshipping Maharaj Sai, we attain both objects, worldly and spiritual, and are fixed in our true nature, getting peace and happiness within.
5. Those who want to attain their welfare should listen to the stories respectfully, enjoy the bliss of the Self and obtain the objects of their lives.
6. By listening (to the stories) one's own peace will be attained, the deluding fears of the world will be removed, and supreme bliss will be a certainty. Listeners will attain *Sadgati* truly.
7. Sai *Samartha* knows the innermost desires of people. He is fully aware of the purport of the devotees. He will complete the work which he has taken upon himself and will be freed from his vow.
8. Sai *Samartha* inspires my intelligence. He alone makes me speak the meaning of his words. I shall narrate them to the best of my ability, which will help in achieving worldly and spiritual welfare.
9. People are not blind nor do they suffer from night-blindness. Despite having normal sight they fail to perceive that their own good is not achieved by the strength of their body and mind alone.

10. Even the body is such that one cannot be certain of life for a moment. Therefore, I earnestly request you to taste this flavour for a moment.
11. Humour is appreciated universally, but Baba's way was uncommon. Through humour, he would impress on us the most profound teachings which were beneficial to all.
12. People do not intently pursue jesting; but Baba's humour was taken fondly. They waited eagerly even to be the butt of those jokes.
13. Generally, no one likes jesting at their cost. But Baba's jests were much appreciated, especially when his words were accompanied by gestures. They easily achieved the desired purpose.
14. Acting effortlessly and with ease, with a smiling face and playful eyes, these added to the entertainment of the jests. Their sweetness is indescribable.
15. Now, I shall narrate an experience. The story is novel and has a moral, and shows how spiritual teaching arose from a jest. Listen to those words with respect.
16. Every week, on Sundays, a big *bazaar* is held in Shirdi. Tent-like shelters (stalls) are pitched in the open and a lot of trade is carried on.
17. There, on the roadside, heaps of vegetables were piled. Groups of grocers and betel-nut leaf sellers also sat in the open.
18. On one such Sunday afternoon while I was pressing Baba's feet, something marvellous happened.
19. The afternoon *durbar* was usually very crowded. In addition, it was a market day and a Sunday. Innumerable persons had come.
20. Sitting on the right, in front of Baba, with my head bent down, I was pressing his feet together with the chanting of the Lord's name.
21. Madhavrao was on the left and Vamanrao on the right. Shrimant Butti was at his usual place ready to serve him.
22. Kaka was also seated there. At that moment Madhavrao laughed and remarked: "What Annasaheb! What are these grains here which seem to be stuck?"
23. Saying so, Madhavrao touched the sleeve of the coat with his fingers, when from the folds of the coat, grains were found.
24. Trying to find out what it was, I straightened my left elbow and grains came rolling down and the people began picking them up.
25. They gathered them as they picked them. A few, about twenty five, were collected. That gave cause for jesting. How had it come about?

26. Surmises followed one after the other. Every one was immersed in thoughts. How did the grains come to be stuck to the coat? Everybody was wondering.
27. How many folds of the coat could there be near the armpit? How could these grams get into them? Where had they come from? And in what manner? It was a mystery which no one could understand.
28. While I was pressing the feet, and concentrating on the chanting of the Lord's name, how had the story of the grams cropped up in the midst of it all?
29. I had been rendering service for sometime. Really, why did they not fall down earlier? Everyone was surprised that they remained there for so long!
30. From where had the grams come there? How did they firmly lodge in the folds? Everyone was wondering. Then, listen to what Baba said.
31. Many people have novel methods of teaching. But Baba gave instructions according to the understanding of the person.
32. Maharaj's method was singular. His way was to make it amusing so that it was well remembered. I have no experience of having heard or seen the like of it elsewhere.
33. He said: "He has a bad habit – that of liking to eat alone. Taking advantage of the market day, he came rubbing the grams in his palms (to take off the skin).
34. It is not good to eat alone. But I know his habit. These grams give the proof. What is there to be surprised about?".
35. Then I said: "It does not occur to me to eat without sharing. Then, whence arises the question of this bad habit? This stigma cannot be applicable to me.
36. Baba, till this day, I have not seen the Shirdi *bazaar*. If I went there, I could buy the grams. And the question of eating them would arise only later.
37. I never eat anything without sharing it with someone. Whosoever has this liking may do so, but this is not my habit".
38. Now observe Baba's skill. How he made devotion firmer to himself! Hear with attention, to what he said after listening to my clear denial.
39. "You share the food with whosoever is near you. But what do you do, when you are alone? What can I also do? Do you remember me?
40. Am I not beside you? Do you offer me a morsel?" Thus he made

the grams a mere pretext and deeply impressed upon me this principle.

41. Eating food without offering to Indra and other deities, the five *pranas*, the fire and defrauding them of it or without offering to all deities made by presenting oblations to the fire before meals, or without offering it to the unexpected guest makes the food highly impure.

42. In principle, this appears insignificant. But its application in daily life is very important. Enjoying the flavour of the food is not the only implication – all the five senses and other enjoyments are included.

43. One who panders to his senses can never hope to achieve spiritual progress. He who has a tight control over the senses alone can succeed.

44. The *Shrutis* proclaim: "*Yada Panchavatishthante*" i.e. when all the five senses and the intellect become steady it is considered the highest state of Yoga. That was emphasized by Baba, through this joke.

45. Words, touch, form, are related to this principle. How full of advice is this teaching of Baba, in relation to this incident!

46. "Before the mind, the intellect and other senses enjoy their objects, remember me first so that they become an offering to me, slowly.

47. "The senses can never remain without their objects; but if these objects are first offered to the Guru, the attachment for them will naturally vanish.

48. "If you desire anything, desire me only. If you are angry vent your anger on me only. Offer me your pride and obstinacy. Be devoted only to me.

49. "Whenever desire, anger, pride arise strongly make me the object towards which to direct them.

50. "In this way, one by one, the Lord will help you in eradicating all the *Vrittis*. The Lord (Govinda) will certainly calm the strong waves of these three venemous qualities.

51. "In fact, this disturbed mental state would be absorbed in my form or would become one with me. A state of peace will be yours at my feet".

52. If you practise this, desires will become weak, on their own, and with the passage of time will be destroyed from their very roots. The mind will be free from all such tendencies.

53. Knowing and believing that the Guru is close by, such a person would never be disturbed by such tendencies.

54. Once such a good habit takes firm root, the bondage of the world will loosen. The Guru's form will be seen in every desirable object. Thus desire itself becomes the form of the Guru.

55. If there is the slightest desire for the enjoyment of the objects, and you think that Baba is close by, the question whether the object is fit to be enjoyed or not will at once arise.

56. The object that is not fit to be enjoyed will be easily shunned. In this way, the devotee's vicious addictions will disappear and an aversion towards the undesirable will develop.

57. He will be ready to obey the rules for the control of the senses, as mainly stated in the *Vedas*. Then, the enjoyment of the objects will be as per the rules and there will be no indiscriminate indulgence.

58. When such a habit is developed, the thoughts about enjoyment of the sense objects are weakened. The desire for the worship of the Guru arises and pure knowledge will sprout.

59. When pure knowledge grows, the bondage of body-consciousness will break and the intellect will be merged in spirit consciousness, leading to infinite bliss.

60. Even though the body is perishable, it is a means towards gaining enlightenment, which is really more desirable than salvation, because through it, we can experience *bhakti*.

61. This fifth rung of gaining enlightenment is superior to the other four *kama, artha, dharma* and *moksha*. They cannot be compared to *bhakti*. Invaluable are the gains of *bhakti*.

62. One who achieves fulfilment by serving the Guru can fully understand the implication of this statement. He alone will achieve enlightenment by understanding the inherent meaning of *bhakti*, knowledge and detachment.

63. One who thinks of the Guru as different from God is like a man reading the whole *Bhagvat* without realising who God is.

64. Though one has read the *Ramayana* completely, he has not been able to understand who was Sita to Rama. Leaving off seeing the duality know firmly that Guru and God are one.

65. Desire for the objects of senses will be destroyed from the root when you serve the Guru, with a pure heart. The mind will become pure and sinless and your Self will manifest with effulgence.

66. So be it. Given the strong desire, it was an easy matter for Baba to produce roasted grams! He needed no special time for the enactment of the most miraculous deeds.

67. A popular conjurer or juggler, merely to earn his livelihood, can produce whatever you ask for, by waving his magic wand.

68. But Sainath is a divine conjurer! What can be said about the prowess of his feat? When he willed, he produced innumerable grams, on the spur of the moment.

69. But, what is the moral of this story? Let us concentrate on it. 'Do not enjoy any object with any of our five senses without first remembering Baba'.

70. When the mind is trained in this way, we will be always reminded of him. The attention will be at Sai's feet in all transactions.

71. That Incarnation of Pure *Brahman* will ever remain before the eyes and then devotion, liberation and non-attachment would arise. Salvation will be achieved.

72. When this beautiful form is fixed before our mental vision, we forget hunger, thirst and the mundane existence. The consciousness of worldly pleasures will disppear and our mind will attain peace.

73. When one makes an effort to recall a stanza, it does not come to mind. But it springs to the mind as soon as one sits down to grind. Similarly, while narrating the *leela* of the grams, I recall the story of Sudama.

74. Once when Balrama, Krishna and Sudama were serving in the Guru's[1] *ashram*, Krishna and Balrama were sent to fetch firewood.

75. No sooner than Krishna and Balrama had set out on the way to the forest, at the behest of the Guru's wife, that Sudama was sent after them.

76. He was given some quantity of grams. The Guru's wife instructed that all three of them should eat them, in case they felt hungry while roaming in the forest.

77. Later he met Krishna in the forest, who said: "*Dada*, I am thirsty". Without mentioning the grams listen to what he said.

78. "Do not drink water on an empty stomach", said Sudama. "Rest a while". But he did not say that the grams should be eaten. Krishna laid down on Sudama's lap.

79. When he saw that Krishna was asleep, Sudama began to eat the grams. "*Dada*, what are you eating? What is this sound?" said Krishna, then.

80. "What is there to eat here? Due to the cold my teeth are chattering so much that I cannot even pronounce clearly the *Vishnusahasranama*"[2].

81. Hearing this reply from Sudama, the omniscient and divine Krishna, said: "I also had a similar dream, truly.

82. Someone was eating another person's share of food. When questioned as to what he was eating, he said 'what can I eat? Dust?', when the word *Tathastuta* (May it be so) was heard.

83. Oh! *Dada*! This is just a dream. Would you ever eat anything without sharing with me? I asked you the question as to what you were eating because I was still not fully awake from the dream."

84. If Sudamaji had known the *leelas* of Krishna of his earlier years, then he would not have made this mistake and would not have suffered the consequences.

85. Nor was it any ordinary suffering because he had to experience the most extreme poverty. Therefore, those who eat alone should bear this in mind.

86. Even a devotee like Sudama, whose friend was Lord Krishna, when he forgot to behave according to the law of good virtuosity, suffered in this world.

87. Later on, when he offered a handful of parched rice earned by his wife with her own labour, Krishna was pleased and granted him all prosperity.

88. So be it. Let me tell you another story which is instructive. To begin with, it began in fun as a joke but in the end was full of great wisdom.

89. Some will enjoy the instruction about the spiritual goal, some will appreciate the skill of the debate, and some will enjoy the wit and humour. All will be happy.

90. This too has humour. A gentleman and a lady got into a fit of obstinacy and started a quarrel in Sai's *durbar*, which was solved without anyone being insulted.

91. This also is a very interesting story. The listeners will enjoy it a lot. When devotees quarrel amongst themselves, laughter will arise.

92. A devotee called Damodar Ghanshyam whose surname was Babre[3], and was nick-named as Anna Chinchnikar, had great love for Baba.

93. By nature he was outspoken and never cared for anyone. He was blunt in saying whether it was right or wrong, and never bothered about the consequences.

94. He was as pious and God fearing, as he was hard and brittle. His head seemed to have been filled with gun powder, for the slightest spark could ignite it.

95. All his actions were brisk and fearless; his transactions were in hard cash; he deferred to none; his dealings were straightforward.

D.G. Babre

96. It is possible to hold a burning coal in the palm, but Anna's fury was worse than that. But he was without any malice by nature, for which Baba loved him.

97. Thus, one afternoon in the *Masjid* when the *durbar* was full of people, Baba was seated with his left arm on the railing.

98. Baba appeared neutral and uninvolved, but unknown to us it was he who caused the quarrels, amongst his devotees and when they were angry or offended, ultimately reconciling both parties.

99. Everyone was serving him in his way – some were pressing the side of his body, some were massaging his feet, some were pressing his back and abdomen.

100. Baba was a *brahmachari* since childhood. His thoughts and behaviour were clean and pure, as he lived a life of perpetual continence. Therefore, he allowed all men and women to serve him.

101. Anna was standing outside the railing, and pressing Baba's left arm gently, by leaning forward. Listen now, with a quiet mind, to what was happening on the right side.

102. There was a lady there, who had singular devotion for Baba. Baba called her 'Mother' while others called her *Mavashibai* (aunt).

103. Everyone called her *Mavashibai*. Her real name was Venubai and her surname was Kaujalagi. Her devotion to Baba was incomparable.

104. Anna had crossed fifty and did not have his full set of teeth. This *Mavashibai* was mature and aged. A quarrel arose between the two.

105. Anna and his wife both served Baba. Mother was a widow. While she was massaging Baba's stomach and sides, she was breathless.

106. *Mavashibai* was pure hearted and vigorous in her service of Sree Sai. She clasped the fingers of both her hands and was kneading Baba's abdomen.

107. Holding Baba with both the hands, from the back to the front of the stomach where one ties the *dhotar*, she pressed and pulled and pushed him about, as if she was churning buttermilk.

108. Engrossed in chanting Sai's name, *Mavashibai* fearlessly massaged. Baba did not utter a word and he seemed tranquil and relaxed.

109. Her method of massaging was extraordinary. She would flatten the stomach till it met the back. But her love aroused compassion within Baba.

110. This pure love of Sai resulted in the best mutual service, as he looked after the welfare of the devotees who continuously remembered him.

111. How many devout practices must we have done to attain the company of this saint's association? But Sai was certainly loving towards the meek and the humble and never disregarded the devotees.

112. What a skill there was in these movements! Baba moved up and down due to it. She also moved in the same way. It was an unique way of serving.

113. Anna was bending forward but was steady. The lady was so engrossed in her service that her face moved up and down (with her strokes). Then, see what happened!

114. In the bliss of her service to Sai, while swaying in doing the massage of the stomach, behold that her face came near Anna's.

115. Taking this opportunity, *Mavashibai*, who was of a very witty disposition, said: "What, Anna! You lewd fellow! Are you, initially, asking me for a kiss?

116. "Have you no consideration for your grey hair? Let me see how you kiss me!" When *Mavashibai* said so, Anna rolled up his sleeves.

117. He said: "Am I that decrepit? Am I such a fool or totally mad? It is you who have brought your face near mine and got ready to pick a quarrel".

118. Realising that a row was in the offing, Baba who had affection for both of them, used a skillful way to pacify them both.

119. Lovingly he said: "Oh, Anna, why are you unnecessarily raising this hue and cry? I do not understand what impropriety is there when the mother is kissed".

120. Listening to this, both felt abashed. The jocular words were subdued at that juncture. Loving laughter sprang everywhere. Everyone liked the humour (of Baba's).

121. Apparently, this is a very small story but discerning listeners will find it interesting. They will observe clearly in the story how to put a stop to trouble.

122. Just as there is love between a mother and a son, if that same loving feeling had existed between both of them, then this situation would not have arisen and there would be no question of angry feeling.

123. When one is whipped, laughter bursts forth; while when one is showered with flowers one feels like crying. Waves of reaction depend upon the imagination and the understanding. Who has not experienced this?

124. There is novelty in Baba's simple ingenuity. He chose words suitable to a situation which soothe as well as teach the listeners immediately.

125. Similarly, once when *Mavashibai* was pressing Baba's stomach vigorously, a staunch devotee felt pity and concern.

126. He said: "*Bai*, be gentle! Is this the way to press the body? Have some compassion. Baba's veins will break".

127. No sooner than Baba heard these words that he got up from his seat, picked up his *satka* with his hand and struck the ground with it.

128. He got enraged and none dared to stand before him. His eyes became red like live charcoal and he glared all around.

129. Just as the cat's eyes shine in the dark, his eyes gleamed during the day. It seemed that a flame from the eyes could immediately burn the universe.

130. He took hold of one end of the *satka* with both hands and pressed it in the hollow of his abdomen. The other end, he fixed to the post in front and tightly embraced the post.

131. The *satka* which was about two or three feet long seemed to have fully gone into the abdomen and all feared that at any moment the abdomen would be ruptured thus ending Baba's life.

132. Baba began to go closer and closer to the post which was fixed and immovable, and pressed his abdomen firmly to it. All the onlookers were terrified.

133. 'Now the abdomen will be ruptured' they thought, biting their fingers with dismay. 'Oh, God! What an unendurable situation! We are dragged into a severe calamity.'

134. Thus, the people were worrying. What could be done in this calamity? All this suffering for this *Mavashibai*!? It was an ordeal for the sake of a devotee.

135. Whenever anyone was serving Baba, if anyone expressed a dislike or correction in between, or if anyone expressed an opinion to the person rendering the service, Baba did not like it.

136. A loving devotee had felt like just giving an indication to *Mavashibai* that Sai Baba should be comfortable. Why should this be the outcome?!

137. So be it. The Lord felt compassion. Calmness arose in Sai's heart. He resumed his seat, relieving everyone's terrified state.

138. Although the loving devotee had been fearless, seeing Baba's strict nature, swore never to commit this mistake in the future.

139. From then onwards, he decided not to meddle in anyone's affairs and to let each person follow his or her own way.

140. *Samartha* was himself full of powers. He knows when to use those powers to restrain the evil and confer favours upon the good. He also knows the good and bad qualities of all those who serve him. Then why should we interfere?

141. 'Sai likes the services of one or finds another's harsh' – these are, after all, our understanding. No one knows the truth.

142. Enough of this humour and jokes. Let those who wish to learn lessons from this do so. May the devotee savour the honey, the taste and the fragrance from Sai's stories.

143. Hemad surrenders at Sai's feet. The next chapter is more profound than this. Sai, the Cloud of Mercy, fulfils the desire of his devotee Damodar.

144. That also was a great miracle. Damodar was greatly afflicted in his life. He was summoned before him by Baba and relieved of his problem.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the twenty fourth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Splendid Humour".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Guru Sandipani.
2. The thousand names of Vishnu.
3. Both he and his wife spent a lot of time in Shirdi. His wife predeceased him. He left his whole estate to the Shirdi Sansthan.

25

Achieving the Devotee's Welfare by Granting What is Desired Deeply

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Sai Maharaj, Ocean of Mercy, Veritable Incarnation of God. Absolute *Brahman*, Great Lord of Yoga – I do my eightfold obeisance before him!
2. Hail! Hail to you - The Highest Adornment of Saints, Abode of All Auspiciousness, Sai *Samartha*, the Refuge of All Devotees! I bow to you, whose desires have been fulfilled.
3. In the last chapter, there was a close study and narration of the wit and humour (of Baba). But this Sai, who is fond of his devotees, always kept his devotees pleased.
4. Sai is the embodiment of immense compassion. What is necessary is a singular devotion. For the devotee who has faith and devotion, there would be no lack of fulfilment of desires.
5. Krishna said to Uddhava: "The *Sadguru* is none but myself". Such a *Sadguru* should be worshipped with love. This is known as singular or unparallel devotion.
6. The desire rose within me to write about the life of Sree Sai. He chose the *leelas* which are very wonderful and worthy of being listened to and he immediately got them written by me.
7. Though I did not have the powers nor the knowledge of the *Shastras*, he gave me, the insignificant one, the inspiration and got the book written by me, to bring about an awareness in his devotees.
8. When the order was given to "keep the notes", at that time my slight intelligence was enriched with knowledge and courage.

9. Immediately, I was emboldened that this Sai, profoundly virtuous, would get his stories collected, for the upliftment of his devotees.
10. Otherwise, would I have dared to enter this sphere of speech, as this biography is like nectar, that is, the *payas* [1] from the *prasad* offered at the feet of the saint.
11. This story of Sai is for the devotees a place where water is given to the thirsty; but instead of water it is nectar. Drink to your fill, by Sai's grace, for it removes the problems of the world.
12. This is not a story but *Somakant* [2], from which the stories of Sai ooze like nectar from the moon, which the thirsty devotees, like the *chakor*, may drink to their fill.
13. Now, loving devotees, with full concentration and without restraint, listen to these pious stories of Sai, which would destroy the sins arising out of *kaliyug*.
14. Once there is singular faith, then all the calamities of that devotee are warded off and he is granted all that is desired deeply. All the difficulties are resolved.
15. Here is a story to that extent, which will demonstrate Sai's love for his devotees. If the listeners hear it with respect, they will feel happy.
16. Therefore, listen with full involvement to this marvellous story, when you will experience what an ocean of compassion, *Gurumaya* is!
17. It is a very brief story, yet without parallel because of the lesson it teaches. Pay attention for a while and all the problems will be driven away.
18. One prosperous devotee called Damu Anna was a well-to-do bangle merchant of Ahmednagar. He was greatly devoted to Sai.
19. The story of that excellent devotee would be a delight to listen to and Sai's immediate protection of the devotee will be distinctly seen.
20. At the *Ramnavmi* annual festival, two big new flags are taken in procession through Shirdi village. Everyone there knows about it.
21. Out of these, one is from Nimonkar and the other one from this Damu Anna. This has been their practice since many years, carried out uninterruptedly with love and devotion.
22. Damu Anna had two wives but no issue. After receiving Sai's blessings, he got a son.
23. It was then that he vowed to offer a flag for the *Ramnavmi* festival

and the taking out of the flag in procession every year started from then.

24. The preparations for the procession were made at Kondya, the carpenter's house. From there, the flags are carried in a procession with the reverbrations of the musical instruments.

25. These long flags were tied to the two corners of the *Masjid*. Every year this is an auspicious signal of the beginning of the festival.

26. The *fakirs* that came there were also sumptuously fed. This merchant observed the *Ramnavmi*, in this way, every year.

27. Now, I present the story of that Damu Anna for the benefit of the listeners. If listened to carefully, you will realise the powers of Sai.

28. His friend from Bombay wrote to him and asked him, if he should do a transaction which would result in a profit of two lakhs of rupees.

29. "We shall be partners and each of us will earn one lakh of rupees. Send a reply immediately. The transaction is clear and there is no risk.

30. "We shall buy raw cotton now. The prices will rise sharply. If the transaction is not done at the opportune time, then we are sure to regret it later".

31. Anna's mind was disturbed because he did not want to miss this opportunity. He had full faith in his friend yet he was not able to firmly decide.

32. Anna began to wonder whether to enter into this transaction or not. "Oh God! What will happen and how?" He was confused.

33. As Damu Anna was a disciple, he wrote to Baba: "I have no independent judgement. You are my protection.

34. "On the face of it, I feel like entering into this transaction. But will it be profitable or cause loss? Please let me know".

35. He addressed the letter to Madhavrao saying: "Please read it to Baba. Let me know his instructions. The business seems to be good".

Madhavrao Deshpande alias Shama

36. The next day, in the afternoon, Madhavrao received the letter. He took it to the *Masjid* and placed it at Baba's feet.

37. "What is it Shama? Why this haste? What is this paper that you have put at my feet?" Baba said. "Baba, that Damu Sheth from Nagar is desirous of asking you something".

38. "What does he write? What does he plan now? It appears that he is

trying to touch the sky. He is not contented with what God has given.

39. "Read, read his letter". Shama said: "What you have just said is exactly the meaning of the letter of Damu Anna, word to word.

40. "God, you sit quietly and put the devotees in a turmoil. Then when they are mentally disturbed, you bring them to your feet.

41. "Some you drag yourself and bring them here; for some you get letters written. When you reveal before hand the secret contents then why do you have the letter read?".

42. "Oh Shama, read, read! Why do you believe me? I am just made this way, speaking out whatever comes to my mind".

43. Then Madhavrao read the letter. Baba listened attentively, and then Baba said feelingly: "The Sheth has taken leave of his senses.

44. "Tell him in reply – What is lacking in your home? Let him be content with half a loaf of bread, and let him not bother about a lakh".

45. Damu Anna was impatiently waiting for the reply. He read it, the moment it reached him.

46. Damu Sheth was disappointed on reading that reply. The fortress of his hopes was dashed to the ground. The tree of his expectations was uprooted.

47. 'Now, if I earn one lakh, I will lend half of it on interest and immediately become a millionaire and live happily in Nagar'.

48. The castles that he had built in the air collapsed on the spot. Damu Anna was greatly disheartened. 'What has Baba done!

49. 'I made a mistake in writing that letter itself! I have caused my own ruin. I have myself kicked the platter of served food, no sooner than it had come.'

50. Be it so. In that letter to Damu Anna, it had been hinted that "there is a difference between seeing and hearing. Come here personally".

51. Such was Madhavrao's indication. 'I too feel that I should go personally. May be that would be beneficial. Perhaps he may give his consent.'

52. Thinking thus, Anna came to Shirdi and sat near Baba, after prostration.

53. He was gently pressing Baba's feet, but had no courage to ask. He began to secretly think that he should keep a share of the profits for Baba.

54. 'Sainatha if you help me in this transaction, I shall offer some part of the profits to you and always remain indebted to you', he thought.

55. He held Sai's feet to his head and Damu Anna sat thus for a while. It is human nature to make decisions and have hesitations. Such thoughts about the transaction were turning round in his mind.

56. Devotees have desires without realising their true welfare. Only the Guru knows what is in the devotee's interest, knowing the past, present and the future.

57. However much anyone kept his thought hidden, Sai *Samartha* dwells within the hearts of everyone as the Witness and he knows the innermost thoughts.

58. When anyone lovingly related his intentions and placed them at Sai's feet, and asked for permission with full faith, Sai showed the right path.

59. This was his vow and all his devotees knew it. He removed the obstacles of all who had completely surrendered.

60. The Guru is the real mother and father. Since numerous births, he is the Guardian and Protector. He is Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar, the Doer and the One who gets everything done.

61. A child wants sweets but the mother gives bitter medicine whether the child cries or writhes. This is her loving decision.

62. How can the child know the properties of that bitter medicine and how it will be beneficial at the proper time? Only the mother knows the indications.

63. Even if Anna kept a share, was Baba likely to forget himself? His love was not motivated by gain. He was ever ready to look after the welfare of his devotees.

64. Money and gold were like dust to him, so what was the value of the share for him? These Saints manifest in the world only to uplift suffering humanity.

65. He is a Saint who has control over his senses and is free from the vices of ignorance and envy and whose aim is to bestow favours on others.

66. Though Damu Anna's idea of giving a share was not expressed and was hidden, Baba gave an open reply. Listen to it with respectful attention.

67. Baba was fully aware of the desires of all beings - present, future, past, like an *amalak* fruit held in the palm.

68. Baba knew very well the future of his devotee. Listen to how he gave timely warnings and spoke clearly.
69. "Bapu, I am not to be involved in anything", Baba informed him lovingly. 'Sai does not think this transaction to be good,' Anna thought and felt ashamed.
70. Hearing these words of Baba, Damu Anna understood what was meant. He gave up the idea and sat quietly with his head downcast.
71. Again, another idea occurred to him whether he should do some other business like dealing in rice, wheat and other grains. Listen to Baba's reply.
72. "You will buy five *seers* for a price and sell seven for the same price." Hearing these words of Baba, Anna felt ashamed.
73. Thus nothing ever happened which was not seen by Sai. Everything everywhere was known to him.
74. On the other side, his friend (Anna's) had troubled thoughts. He did not know what to do. There was even no reply from Anna.
75. Then that Sheth wrote and told him all that had happened. His friend was surprised on reading it and thought 'strange is fate'.
76. 'What a wonderful transaction had come our way! Why did he not think for himself instead of dancing attendance on the fakir? He has unnecessarily lost the gains.
77. God gives, but we lose by our own actions. The mind stops working when evil days are imminent. Why did this fakir have to come in the way of this clear business?
78. What can he say who has given up the normal way of life and goes from door to door, like a mad man, to beg for morsels of food to feed himself!
79. Let it be. He was not destined to have it, therefore, his mind acted thus. I should look for another partner. Whatever is not destined would never happen.'
80. May it be whatsoever! Anna remained contented. Someone else became his friend's partner whose *karma* dragged him into it. He got into trouble.
81. They had hoped to make money but suffered reversals. They had losses, as if the *fakir's satka* had beaten them.
82. How fortunate is my Damu Anna! Very wise! Sai is a true pearl to him, wise and sagacious. How compassionate was he to the devotee!
83. The friend said: "If he had followed my advice, then he would have lost heavily. He was saved because he followed the *fakir*. How wonderful was his faith!

84. "I laughed at his madness and was proud of my own cleverness. It was truly futile. That's the experience I got.

85. "I reviled that *fakir* unnecessarily. If I had followed his advice, he would have given me timely warning also and I would not have suffered this loss".

86. Now, I will narrate one more story and then bring to a close the narration about Anna. The listeners will be happy and will wonder at Baba.

87. See, what happened once! A parcel came from Goa. A *Mamlatdar* named Rale, sent some famous mangoes.

88. It was addressed to Madhavrao with the intention that they should be offered at Baba's feet, with respect. They were accepted at Kopergaon and brought to Shirdi.

89. When opened in the *Masjid* before Baba, the mangoes were found to be lovely. There were more than three hundred and the fruit was full of sweet aroma.

90. Baba saw all of them and gave the lot to Madhavrao, who put four in the *kolamba* (earthern pot in which Baba put all the food), and took the rest away.

91. As soon as the fruit was put in the *kolamba*, Baba said: "Those fruits are for Damu Anna. Let them be there".

92. Two hours later Damu Anna arrived at the *Masjid*, to offer worship, with flowers etc.

93. He had no idea of what had happened earlier. Baba began to speak loudly: "Those mangoes are for Damiya and not ours, even though people are casting covetous eyes upon them.

94. "He should take the mangoes for whom they are meant. Why should we have what is for another? He alone should eat for whom they are meant and then die after eating them".

95. Anna naturally accepted them as being *prasad*. Anna knew fully well not to misinterpret the words as being inauspicious.

96. Anna finished the worship and left. He came again and asked: "I do not know to which wife I should give these fruits – the older or the younger".

97. Baba replied: "Give to the younger one. She will have eight children. Four boys and four girls, all caused by this *Amra* (mango) *leela*".

98. Since he had no children, he had made a lot of efforts. He had invoked Saints and Sages to get their blessings.

99. He danced attention on Saints and Sages for this purpose and to

propitiate his planets he even tried astrology, to such a degree that he became an astrologer himself.

100. According to the stars in his horoscope, he had no children. This was the outcome of the knowledge of astrology. Anna knew this very well and had given up all hopes.

101. Yet, these were the words of assurance from the saint Sai. Hope dawned again as the *Samartha* was propitious.

102. Be it so. After some time, Baba's words came true. As the *prasad* of the saint germinated and bore fruit, the children were born.

103. It happened as it was said. Anna's own forecast was proved to be wrong. Sai's words turned out to be fruitful. Sons were born as he had promised.

104. May it be whatsoever. This was Baba's speech when Baba was in body. Later even after he left the body, he had determined the greatness of his speech.

105. "Even when I pass away, believe in my words. From my tomb my bones will give you assurance.

106. "Not only I, but my tomb would be speaking, moving and communicating with those who surrender themselves whole heartedly to me.

107. "Do not worry that I shall be hidden from your eyes. You will hear my bones speak and discuss your welfare.

108. "Always remember me only. Believe in me heart and soul. Pray without selfish motives and you will attain your welfare".

109. "O' Sai *Sadguru*, the wish-fulfilling tree of the devotees, let not Hemad forget and lose sight of your feet.

110. "O' Guruvara, the One who is Compassionate towards the devotees, make haste and reach us. There is no respite in the wordly affairs. Free us from this cycle of births and deaths.

111. "Our nature depends on our tendencies. Our senses are forever directed outwardly. Restrain us from the attraction of the objects of the senses. Introvert us.

112. "In the ocean of worldly existence, we are tossed around like waves in a whirlpool. Extend your timely help and relieve us.

113. "The senses run amok; evil practice overpowers us. Please dam up this unrestrained flow. Turn back the host of senses.

114. "If the senses are not introverted, there is no prospect of Self-realisation. Without that, how can there be Supreme Bliss? Life will be futile.

115. "Neither wife, nor son, nor numerous friends will be of any use in the end. You alone are the lasting friend for the final journey. You are the giver of joys and salvation.

116. "Unravel the net of actions and sins and free us from its misery. Uplift the poor and the meek with the power of your grace, Maharaja.

117. "Destroy from their roots evil tendencies and argumentative habits. Let our tongues get a passion for chanting the name, O' pure, Sairaya!

118. "Grant to me the ability to love you so intensely that I may forget all my resolves, doubts, even my body and home. Take away my ego also.

119. "Make me ever remember your name and forget all other things. Remove the restlessness of the mind and make it steady and calm.

120. "If you just clasp us, the darkness of night of our ignorance will vanish and we shall live happily in your light. What more can we desire?

121. "That you made us drink the nectar of your life story and awakened us from our slumber is due to your grace. Isn't this something extraordinary?"

122. The next chapter is sweeter than this. The listeners' longing will be satisfied. Their love at Sai's feet will increase. Their faith will also be strengthened.

123. Once, a devotee came for *darshan* after obtaining permission from his Guru. On bowing at Sai's feet, his faith in his own Guru was strengthened.

124. Similarly, another gentleman who was rich but having great problems came for Sai's *darshan* with his son and his wife.

125. How his desire was fulfilled and his epileptic son was cured by mere *darshan*! He was also reminded of an earlier experience.

126. Therefore, Hemad surrenders to Sai and respectfully requests the listeners to become inclined towards Sai's stories, and make the listening meaningful.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the twenty fifth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita,* written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people called "Achieving the Devotee's Welfare by Granting What is Desired Deeply".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

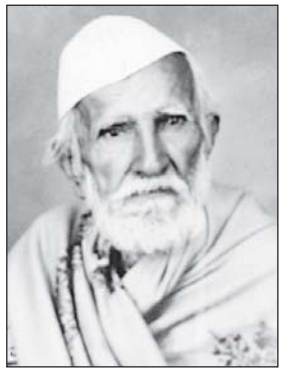
May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. A dish (delicacy) composed of cooked rice, milk and sugar.
2. Jewel which starts oozing water when the rays of the moon fall on it.

Damodar Rasane alias Damu Anna

Trimbak D. Rasane
- alias Thanashah



Dattatraya D. Rasane
- alias Daulatshah

26

Prevention of Epilepsy and Suicide & Stablisation of Faith at One's Own Guru's Feet

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. All objects of enjoyment relate to the elements and elementals – in fact, the entire universe is contained within the soul as a reflection of a city in a mirror. The confusion is on account of *Maya* which is manifested.
2. In reality, it (*Maya*) has not manifested. It is forever present in the Absolute. But it is also in the world bringing all the movable and immovable objects into being.
3. Whatever is seen in the mirror does not exist in it. Like visions seen in a dream appear very real but on waking all that is gone.
4. When one is awakened the dream world disappears. The joy of the light of Unity appears because of the *Sadguru*'s significant words.
5. The vibrating of the existence of the universe is really the support of That; not dependent on anything else. When the Great Soul, that is the Lord, becomes agreeably disposed, then only this realisation is possible.
6. Understand this nature of the soul to be the glow of the Self having (existential character) the nature of 'Sat'. Then this world of the elements and elementals is the manifestation of illusion, mere sport.
7. All this world of the elements and elementals, right from *Brahman* to a blade of grass is imaginary. It is this expanse of the world which is merely a creation of illusion.
8. The serpent, the garland of flowers, the stick, the current are considered to be a rope due to the ignorance of their real nature. Similarly, the entire expanse of the universe has no support in real nature.

9. All this world that is perceived is of the nature of illusion. This comes to an end on knowing reality, that is at the time of awakening caused by the words of the Guru.
10. On pondering over the meaning of the verbal form of '*GRINATI*'[1], the third person singular, the Guru alone is able to explain at the time of giving instruction to the disciple.
11. Therefore, let me pray to Baba : "Please introvert my senses. Give me discrimination and the ability to identify the transient from the eternal. Grant me too the gift of asceticism.
12. I am always an indiscriminating fool, obstructed by profound ignorance. My mind is always soaring on evil imagination and creates all these difficulties for me.
13. See to it that I have an unshakable faith in my Guru's words, which are as irrefutable as the revelations of the *Vedas*. Make my mind like a mirror so that it can receive Self-Knowledge.
14. Moreover, *Sadguru* Sainath, make me fully understand this knowledge, because without experience when one talks about it, it is mere prattle. Can that achieve the ultimate goal?
15. Therefore, Baba, with your power let me experience this knowledge myself, whereby I can easily attain liberation. Grant me these alms, I beg of you.
16. Consequently, O' Lord *Sadguru* Sai, I offer my bodily pride to you. From now onwards take care of me as there is no self with me.
17. Take away my bodily consciousness so that I feel neither pain nor pleasure. Control me so that I act only in accordance with your wish.
18. Or, you become my ego yourself and take over all doer and enjoyership. Let me not have anxiety on that account.
19. Hail, hail to you - the One who has fulfilled all desires. Enjoin my love at your feet. O abode of Auspiciousness, may this inconstant mind find complete peace at your feet.
20. Who else but you can speak words for our welfare, relieve us of our miseries and bring us contentment?
21. It was Shirdi's good fortune that, Baba, you arrived there. Later you stayed on there and gave that place a status of pilgrimage.
22. Blessed is Shirdi's fortune that this merciful Sai made this place auspicious and adorned it by his own stay.
23. You are the one to kindle me. You alone are the one to provoke my speech, so who am I to sing your praises? You are the doer who gets things done.

24. To be always in your company is itself our study of the *Vedant*. Listening to your life story daily is itself our reading of religious texts.

25. Chanting your name without wasting a moment is itself equivalent to doing *katha and kirtan*. This itself is our regular meditation and that is itself our satisfaction.

26. We do not wish to have such happiness which causes us to turn our backs on worship, for could there be any bigger obstacle in attaining the ultimate goal?

27. Let my tears of joy be the warm water to wash your feet; let me besmear your body with the sandal paste of pure love; and let me cover your body with the cloth of true faith.

28. May this *puja* from my heart propitiate you better than the outward ritualistic one and endow you with pleasure and happiness.

29. Let us offer the eight lotuses in the form of our eight very pure, *satvik* [2] emotions and the fruit in the form of our concentrated mind.

30. Let us apply *buka* [3] of devotion to the forehead, tie the girdle of deep devoutness and place our neck on your toes. Then let us enjoy the tender and wonderful celebration.

31. Adorning him with the jewels of our love, let us wholeheartedly ward off the evil eye[4]. Make a *chamar* with our five *pranas* and wave it before you to ward off the heat.

32. After concluding such blissful worship, let us do the eightfold obeisance, offer fragrance and oblations of water. In this manner, we shall worship you, Sairaja, for our own welfare.

33. We remember and always chant 'Sai *Samartha*' to attain the desired object; and with the same *mantra* also attain the ultimate goal and gratify our faith in you".

34. In the last chapter, it was narrated how Sai *Samartha* - the Cloud of Mercy, gave instructions for the benefit of his devotees.

35. Now, in this chapter, it shall be narrated how a devotee's faith was confirmed in his own Guru. Listen to that story.

36. In the last chapter, the nectar-like story of the devotee Pant was introduced. Listeners should hear attentively to clearly understand the true facts.

37. How many kinds of experiences he gave; and how he put the collyrium of faith in the eyes; how he was firmly settled at his Guru's feet and how the mind felt tranquil.

38. Once, a devotee named Pant went to Shirdi, along with friends, to have Sai's *darshan*, with a lot of effort.
39. He was already graced and was attached to his own Guru. He hesitated about going to Shirdi.
40. Yet, as is one's destiny it comes to pass without expectation. The opportunity to have Sai's *darshan* came and resulted in immense joy for him.
41. Man proposes but God disposes. One cannot do anything against destiny. Listen to that, with a quiet mind.
42. A number of people left their homes, having decided to go to Shirdi by train, travelling happily together.
43. When they boarded the train, they unexpectedly met that Pant who was already in it. Pant came to know their plans about going to Shirdi.
44. Amongst the group were some friends of Pant and also the mother-in-law and father-in-law of his child. Though Pant had no intention to go (to Shirdi), they pressed him to go along.
45. Initially, Pant also had the ticket for the destination, he had in mind. But later he changed his mind.
46. As the friends and the father-in-law asked him to go with them to Shirdi, Pant agreed to their persuasion though he had no desire.
47. Pant got down at Virar, while the rest of the group continued to Bombay, Pant borrowed some money for his expenses and then he also went to Bombay.
48. As he did not want to displease his friends, he obtained permission from his own Guru and then came to Shirdi, along with all the others, happily.
49. All went to the *Masjid* at eleven in the morning. Seeing the crowd of devotees offering worship, they felt happy.
50. Seeing Baba's meditative figure all were filled with joy. Suddenly, Pant got a fit and fell down unconscious.
51. There was no movement in his limbs and he seemed impaired. Those who had accompanied him were very worried and frightened.
52. With Sai Baba's grace and the help of the others, on sprinkling water on his head, he regained full consciousness.
53. On gaining consciousness, he sat up bewildered and it seemed as if he had just woken from sleep.
54. Baba being omniscient knew that he was a disciple of another Guru

and assured him fearlessness and confirmed his faith in his own Guru.

55. He said: "Come what may, leave not your bolster (support, which is the Guru). Remain steady always, always at one-ment with him".

56. Pant realised the significance of the words and he was reminded of his own Guru. Throughout the rest of his life, he remembered Sai Baba's kindness.

57. Similarly, a gentleman called Harishchandra, resident of Bombay, was greatly troubled on account of his son who suffered from epilepsy.

58. He tried many allopathic and ayurvedic doctors, but there was no cure. All efforts were in vain. The only remedy was to resort to the *sadhus* and Saints.

59. In 1910, Das Ganu's *kirtans* started and spread the fame of Sree Sainath. A large number of people took to visiting Shirdi.

60. Though a tiny village, it had a great destiny. Shirdi became another Pandharpur and many pilgrims visited it.

61. Many people experienced that sicknesses were cured by mere *darshan*, or the touch of Baba's hand, or with a merciful glance.

62. The devotee, having surrendered completely, obtained his welfare. Knowing everybody's minds, Baba fulfilled the desires of all.

63. People hurried to visit him, as evil spirits fled at the touch of the *udi*, blessings cured diseases, and a kind glance from his eyes pushed away all obstacles.

64. Having heard of such greatness from the *kirtans* and the books of Das Ganu, from one mouth to another, the desire for *darshan* arose in Harishchandra Pitale.

65. Pitale came to Shirdi village bringing family and children, presents and fruits, for the *darshan* due to the merits of his past births.

66. The son was placed at Baba's feet and he prostrated before Baba. Then something extra-ordinary happened, which very much disturbed Pitale.

67. No sooner than the boy's eyes met Sai's, the boy became unconscious, rolled up his eyes, and fell down all of a sudden. The parents became frantically worried.

68. The boy fell unconscious on the ground. A lot of froth came out from his mouth. The parents were greatly disturbed and wondered what was their fortune.

69. It seemed as if there was no breath; the froth continued from the

mouth; the whole body was soaked with perspiration and there seemed to be no hope for his life.

70. These fits had happened frequently to the boy but never had there been one of this intensity or duration.

71. An attack of this kind had never happened before and would never happen again. It was as if he was about to die. The mother was unable to control the flow of tears, seeing the condition of her child.

72. "With what purpose did we come here and what has happened! The remedy has aggravated the condition. These feet (Sainath's) have proved ruinous. All our troubles in coming here have been in vain.

73. "Coming here has been like running into a house to escape from the pursuit of thieves, only to have the house collapse over our heads", that lady said.

74. "Our condition is like that of a cow running away from a tiger to save her life only to run into the hands of a butcher!

75. "Or a traveller, tormented by the heat of the sun, who takes refuge under a tree which uproots and falls upon him.

76. "Or having faith in God one goes to the temple which itself collapses on one's body. Similar is the case".

77. Baba then assured them: "Have a little courage and patience. Pick up the boy carefully. He will regain consciousness.

78. "Take the boy to your lodgings. And in about half-an-hour he will return to life. Do not be unnecessarily flurried".

79. So be it. Later, they acted accordingly. Baba's words came true. Pitale and his family rejoiced and all their doubts disappeared.

80. On being taken to the *wada*, the young boy came immediately to his senses. The worries of the parents disappeared. There was a lot of joy.

81. Then Pitale came with his wife for Baba's *darshan* and performed the eight-fold salutation with great humility.

82. Seeing the son's recovery, he sat pressing Baba's feet with mind full of gratitude and happiness. Baba asked with a smile:

83. "Have the waves of doubt and desires ebbed now? Sree Hari will protect him who has faith and patience".

84. Pitale was a wealthy man from birth. He came from a good and well-known family. He lavishly distributed sweets and dry fruits and even offered fruits, betel-leaves etc. to Baba.

85. His wife was of a very *satvik* nature – loving, having faith and devotion. She would sit near the pillar, gazing at Baba.

86. As she gazed, her eyes would fill with tears. She did this daily. Seeing her novel way of showing affection, Baba was won over by her.

87. Saints are like God – they are ever at the service of the devotees. They are very gracious to those who worship them whole-heartedly.

88. May it be whatsoever. Then, this family desired to leave. They came to the *Masjid* for *darshan*, and took Baba's permission and the *udi* ; and made preparations to leave.

89. At that time, Baba took out three rupees from his pocket and called Pitale close to him. Hear what he said:

90. "Bapu, earlier I had given you two rupees. Add these three to them and worship them. You will be benefitted".

91. Pitale took the rupees in his hands and accepted them with joy as *prasad* . He prostrated at Baba's feet and said: "Grant me your grace, Maharaja".

92. Waves of thoughts arose in his mind: 'This is my first visit. So what is it that Baba is saying? I am definitely not able to understand.

93. 'As I had not seen Baba earlier, how could he have given me two rupees earlier?' He could not at all understand the meaning or the advice. Pitale was bewildered.

94. 'How do I get the meaning explained?' His curiosity increased. Baba did not give any indication and remained silent.

95. Any words spoken by Saints, however casually, are bound to prove true. Pitale was fully aware of this, so he was puzzled.

96. But later when he went to Bombay and his home, there was an old woman at home who satisfied his curiosity.

97. The old woman was Pitale's mother. When she enquired about what had transpired at Shirdi, as a matter of course, the topic about the three rupees cropped up. Even she was unable to co-relate it.

98. After thinking it over she remembered and the old lady said to Pitale: "Now I recall completely. What Baba said is true.

99. "As you took your son now to Shirdi for Sai's *darshan*, similarly your father had earlier taken you to Akkalkot.

100. "The Maharaj there was a *Siddha* - benevolent, very famous, omniscient, *yogi*, very wise. Your father was also a very moral man.

101. "He accepted your father's worship and the *Yogiraja* was pleased with it. As *prasad* he gave him two rupees, in order to perform *puja*.

102. "These earlier two rupees too, Swami gave to you, my son, as *prasad* in order to worship.

103. "These two rupees were kept in the shrine and your father daily worshipped them with great faith.

104. "I alone know about his faith. He acted according to his faith. After his death, the *puja* and the articles for performing it became children's playthings.

105. "There was no faith in God; and even shame was felt to do *puja*. The children were appointed, in turns, to do the *puja*. Who would take care of the rupees?

106. "Many years passed thus. The importance of those rupees was lost. All memory of them faded away. The two rupees disappeared.

107. "So be it. You are really blessed. Not only have you met Maharaj, in the form of Sai, to remind you of a forgotten duty but to ward off dangers.

108. "Therefore, from now onwards leave off all doubts and bad thoughts. Follow in the footsteps of your ancestors and do not slip into bad habits.

109. "Go on worshipping the rupees. Consider the Saint's *prasad* as a jewel. *Samartha* Sai has convinced you of this significance and revived a life of *bhakti*".

110. Hearing this story from his mother, Pitale was full of bliss and joy. He realised Sai's all-pervasiveness and the significance of his *darshan*.

111. That nectar of his mother's words awakened his former feelings. He repented and atoned paving the way for his future welfare.

112. So be it. Whatever had to happen, happened. The Saint had awakened in him the future obligations. Gratefully and conscientiously, he thereafter carried out his duties.

113. Similarly, I will relate another experience. Listen to it with a quiet mind. It shows the method adopted by Baba to control undisciplined devotees.

114. Gopal Narayan Ambdekar, was a great devotee of Baba from Pune. Listen to his story.

115. He was in service in the Excise Department of the British regime. After completing service for ten years, he left it and stayed at home.

116. Fortune changed and turned its back on him. All the days of one's life are not the same. The stars rotated and brought a bad spell. Who is there who can avoid these changes?

117. In the beginning he was in service in Thane District and later his

luck brought him to Javhar, where he was an officer. It is there that he became jobless.

118. To regain a job is not easy[5]. Where could he get it again? He tried his level best at that time.

119. But he did not succeed. So he decided to follow an independent trade but here too troubles beset him until he finally lost all hope.

120. Year after year, his financial condition worsened till he hit rock bottom. Calamities followed one after the other and the household condition became unbearable.

121. Seven years passed this way. Each year he went to Shirdi and related his grievances to Baba, imploring him with prostrations day and night.

122. In 1916, he was so utterly disgusted that he felt like committing suicide after going to Shirdi.

123. So this time he stayed for two months at Shirdi with his wife. Listen to the story of what happened one night.

124. While sitting in a bullock-cart, in front of Dixit's *wada*, Ambdekar was in deep thoughts.

125. Fed up with life and very depressed, he thought 'enough now! No more of this trouble.' He lost the desire to live.

126. Thinking thus and having lost interest in life. Ambdekar got ready to throw himself immediately into the well.

127. 'Availing of a quiet time when there would be nobody around, I will carry out my purpose and rid myself of all the troubles'.

128. He knew that committing suicide was a great sin. Yet he determined to act upon his thought. But Baba Sai, being the puppeteer, he averted this folly.

129. At a very short distance, there was the residence of a hotel owner, who also had Baba's support, being one of the persons who served Baba.

130. Sagun[6] came to the threshold of his house, at that time, and asked Ambdekar: "Have you ever read this book on the life of Akkalkot Maharaj ?"

131. "Let me see, let me see. What is that book?" Saying that Ambdekar took it in his hand. Turning the pages at random, he began to read here and there.

132. By wonderful coincidence, the subject which he came across was worth reading as it related to his inner thoughts. He was deeply impressed.

133. I will relate for all the listeners the story that he came across by chance, giving the sum and substance of the story very briefly, for fear of lengthening this book.
134. There was a great Saint at Akkalkot. Maharaj used to be absorbed in meditation. A devotee, who was grievously ill, was undergoing unbearable suffering.
135. He had served for a long time hoping to be rid of the disease. He was unable to bear the pain anymore. He became very dejected.
136. He determined to commit suicide, and choosing a time in the night, going to a well he threw himself in it.
137. Maharaj came there at that time and pulled him out with his own hands. "Whatever is destined has to be fully borne", he advised him.
138. "All physical tribulations, diseases, even leprosy and all other problems, which we have because of our actions in the previous birth, unless they are fully borne, we cannot be free from them, even by committing suicide.
139. "If this suffering remains unfinished, you have to be born again. Therefore, try to bear up with this trouble a little longer. Do not kill yourself".
140. Reading this story, which was apt for the occasion, Ambdekar was surprised and felt ashamed on the spot, understanding Baba's all-pervasiveness.
141. Ambdekar realised that the fate due to previous birth must be endured. He was made to understand this at the right time and it was good that he had not attempted the reckless deed.
142. This illustrative story was like a voice from outer space. It strengthened his faith at Sai's feet. Sai's deeds are unimaginable.
143. 'Sai's warning guided through Sagun's words. If there had been some delay in getting this unexpected book, my life would have been ruined.
144. 'I would have lost my own life, and would have caused utter destruction of the family. My wife would have had to undergo a lot of suffering and I would not have achieved my own good nor attained my spiritual goal.
145. 'Baba inspired Sagun and made the book an instrument to divert my mind from committing suicide'.
146. If such an incident had not occurred, the poor man would have unnecessarily lost his life. But where there is a saviour like Sai, who would be able to kill?

147. This devotee's father had faith in Akkalkot Swami. Baba made him understand that he should follow in his father's footsteps.

148. So be it. Later everything was well. Those days passed. He studied astrology, putting in a lot of efforts, and that was rewarding.

149. He got Sai's grace and blessings. Fortune smiled upon him, later on. He became well-versed in astrology and his earlier adverse circumstances ended.

150. His love for the Guru increased, and he achieved happiness and health. He had ease and happiness in family life. He became very happy.

151. There are innumerable such miracles, each one greater than the other. But lest this book is lengthened, I have confined myself to the essence.

152. Hemad surrenders at Sai's feet. The next chapter narrates the interesting story of how Shama[7] was presented with the gift of the *Vishnu Sahasranama*.

153. "I do not want it. I do not want it", said Shama. But Baba had immense love for him. He forcibly gave him the *Sahasranama*, by ascribing its wonderful greatness.

154. Now listen to this story with respectful attention. Baba will be seen granting grace, when the time is ripe, to a devotee who had not the slightest desire.

155. It will be seen in the chapter how inexplicable are the ways of granting grace, in the *Sadguru*'s abode. Listeners should hear this with respect.

156. He who is the highest form of well-being is that Sai – the store of all attributes! He is fortunate who hears about him and speaks of his glories, being an act of religious merit, his life being purifying.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the twenty sixth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people called "Prevention of Epilepsy and Suicide and Stabilisation of Faith at One's Own Guru's Feet".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

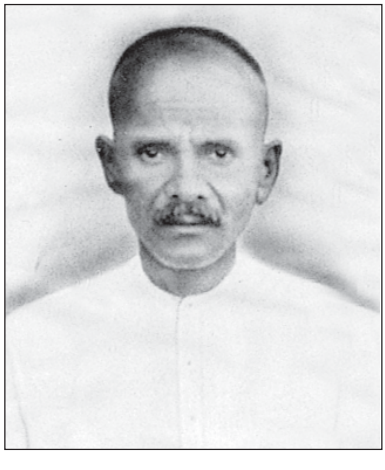
May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. One who teaches or gives '*upadesh*' i.e. the Guru
2. Perspiration, Stillness, Horripilation, Choking with emotion, Pallor, Tears, Shivering and Unconsciousness.
3. Fragrant black powder.
4. With bitter *neem* leaves, salt and mustard waved over the body.

5. In Marathi, it is compared to water which easily slips off the esculent vegetable leaf.
6. Sagun Meru Naik.
7. Shama i.e. Madhavrao Deshpande.

Hail, hail to you the One who has fulfilled all desires. Enjoin my love at your feet. O abode of Auspiciousness, may this inconstant mind find complete peace at your feet. (Ch. 26, ovi 19)



Sagun Meru Naik

27

Bestowal of Initiation and Grace

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. When a person takes refuge at the feet of the *Sadguru*, he gets the merit of bowing to the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh – as if in reality, he has bowed to *Parabrahma* and supreme heavenly bliss manifests.
2. Taking the plunge into the ocean has the merit of bathing in all the *tirthas* ; and sitting in the shadow of the Guru's feet is like attaining all the gods.
3. Hail, hail to thee, Sai *Sadguru* ! Hail, hail to thee, the wish-fulfilling tree which grants absorption into the essence of *Brahman*! Hail, hail to thee, the ocean of Self-knowledge! Create in us respect for the story.
4. May the devotees enjoy the nectar of your story as the *Chatak* (bird) savours the rain drops from the clouds. May all your devotees savour them and be happy always.
5. Let the devotees, as they hear your pure story, break out in perspiration all over their bodies, fill their eyes with tears of love, and have their breath caught in their throats.
6. Let the listeners and their families be overcome with emotion, have horripilation, and cry and sob often.
7. Let their hostilities and their differences, small and great, vanish. Let them realise that this is a sign of the grace of the Guru dawning upon them.
8. The Guru's grace is not seen with the eye and it is inapprehensible through the senses. No one except the *Sadguru*, can grant it, and you will find no one else to do it in all the three worlds.
9. Without unlimited love for the Guru's feet arising, desire and all

the other six weaknesses in our character cannot be destroyed and the eight *satvik* emotions cannot arise in us.

10. The Guru is most pleased when the devotee knows the Self; and the more the devotee turns towards the attainment of the spiritual goal, the more the Guru is to be admired.
11. The body, home, son and wife – 'I' and 'mine' – these are fruitless toils and turmoils of human life. All this is momentary *Maya*, like the noon shadow.
12. 'Let not the tangle of *Maya* be an obstacle'. If this is the thought in your mind, then accomplish whole-hearted surrender to Sai.
13. Even those who are well-versed in the *Vedas* have become helpless in bringing to an end the power of *Maya*. He alone will be saved who sees God in all creation.
14. Blessed indeed was Chand Patil who, leaving the Nizam's regime, came to Nevasa bringing along with him the fakir Sai.
15. The fakir stayed there for six months to a year. Kama of Kanad village was made to stay there with him.
16. So be it. Later he went to the famous Takali (village) and taking Dagadu Tamboli with them, Kama and Baba, this group came to Shirdi from there[1].
17. There are numerous holy places of pilgrimage, here and there, but for Sai's devotees Shirdi is the most holy.
18. If by good luck this contact had not taken place, then how could this great fortune of association with him have come our way? This was the greatest fortune for us devotees.
19. Those devotees who came and surrendered to attain their objectives, Sai showed them the right and virtuous path to ensure their well-being.
20. Therefore, the listeners should read over and over again the *Satcharita*, with full concentration. This is the best means of gaining Guru's Grace. The story of Sai is pure and holy.
21. In the last chapter, it was narrated that a person's faith was confirmed in his own Guru and another was awakened with an indication of Akkalkot *Swami*.
22. One man was prevented from committing suicide and given a new lease of life by an unique method. His death was determinedly and designedly averted.
23. Now, in this chapter it will be narrated how Sai, when pleased, granted his grace upon the devotees and made them prosperous and happy.

24. His mode of teaching was marvellous, and depended upon how and to whom it was given. It was full of wit and humour, with light-hearted laughter. The listeners should hear it attentively.
25. The many ways, in which he taught, have already been discussed in this book. Depending upon the capability, the path was shown.
26. The doctor knows how to diagnose the disease and the effect of the medicine. The patient is ignorant and asks for some jaggery at first.
27. The jaggery, though sweet, is harmful. The patient, however becomes adamant and is not even prepared to take the small bowl of medicine in his hand till the jaggery is first put on his hand.
28. The use of force on a sick person does not work. The doctor then devises a plan and gives first the jaggery and then the medicine, but achieves his objective.
29. But he changes the antidote to negate the ill effects of jaggery. The given medicines have their effect. Similar were the methods of Baba.
30. This was not the universal principle. His way of granting grace depended upon the qualifications, nature, service and love of the devotee.
31. Baba's ways are unique. When he was pleased with anyone, he showered his grace. Listen, under what circumstances it was done.
32. If it occurs to him, he achieves the welfare of the devotee while casually joking and laughing, without anyone contemplating it.
33. If the devotees desired casually to read some religious book, they placed the book in Baba's hands and received it back as *prasad*.
34. Then, when that book was read, it would be most beneficial. It would achieve the highest welfare of the orators and the listeners, as it would be full of *prasad*.
35. Some offered the pictures of the *Dashavatar* [2], some the *stotras* of the *Dashavatar*, some the *Panchratani Gita* [3] and other holy books and pictures.
36. Das *Ganu's* 'Sant Leelamrut' and 'Bhaktaleelamrut', also 'Vivek Sindhu[4]' were offered and Baba gave them to Shama.
37. "Shama these books are for you", he would say. "Keep them, at home, properly protected." Shama bowed and obeyed the orders and kept them tied in a piece of cloth.
38. With this thought, the devotees also bought books from the shops to place in Baba's hands and to receive them back as *prasad*.
39. Though Baba's nature was kind and generous, to do this also needed courage, so they took Madhavrao along with them, to tackle the situation.

40. At the opportune time, he would put the book in Baba's hands. Just as Baba knew the importance of the book, he also knew about the devotee's abilities.
41. Sometimes, when the devotees put a book in Baba's hands, Baba would leaf through the book. The devotees would put forward their hands to get the book back.
42. But Baba did not give it back to them. He would hand it to Madhavrao, saying: "Shama! keep this with you. Let it be with you for the time being".
43. Shama would specifically ask: "Shall I give it back to him to whom it belongs, as he has eagerly stretched out his hand for it?" Even then, he said: "You keep it".
44. Once the devotee Kaka Mahajani, who liked reading the *Bhagvat*, carried with him a copy of it and came to Shirdi.
45. Madhavrao came to meet him. He picked up the book to read it and went with it to the *Masjid*. Baba casually asked him.
46. "Shama, what is this book in your hand?" Shama told him about it. Baba took it in his hand and returned it after seeing it.
47. The same book, the same copy, the same 'Nath Bhagvat' was earlier given to Mahajani as the *prasad* from *Sree's* hands.

Laxman Ganesh
alias Kaka Mahajani

48. "This book does not belong to me. It is Kaka Mahajani's. I borrowed it as I desired to read it." Shama clarified.
49. Yet Baba said to him: "The fact is that I have given it to you. You keep it in your collection tied in a piece of cloth. It will be of use to you".
50. Be it so. After some time, Kaka came again to Shirdi and brought with him another copy of the 'Bhagvat'. He placed it in Baba's hands.
51. It was given back as *prasad*. "Preserve it well", Baba instructed. "This alone will stand in good stead for you", Kaka was assured.
52. "This itself will prove most useful to you. Do not give it to anyone, certainly", he said this with a lot of solicitude. Kaka bowed with love.
53. Baba, himself had fulfilled all desires and was least interested in any article. What need did he have to collect as he was divinity personified in his conduct.
54. Who could know Baba's intentions? But reading and listening to this collection of books were a means of purification for his devotees.

55. Now Shirdi had become a sacred place and Baba's disciples would come from different and distant places, and gather from time to time to celebrate, gain wisdom and praise the Lord, in a series of sessions.
56. These books would prove useful then. Shama would show them after taking them out from their wrappings. We will no longer be there but these books will embody the knowledge.
57. Whenever the devotees would read these very holy books, whether at Shirdi or elsewhere, they would recollect (Baba and his teachings). This seems to be a reason for making the collection.
58. Whether it be the 'Ramayan' or the 'Bhagvat', or any other book dealing with spiritual matters, or reading the life stories of Ram, Krishna and others, it is only Sai who comes before the mind's eye.
59. It seems as if Sai himself is playing the part of the great characters in these books; and the narrator and the listeners see Sai's image before them, every time.
60. According to the *Shastras*, if a book is offered to the Guru or given as a gift to a Brahmin, therein lies the welfare of the donor.
61. Was this a simple purpose for which Baba had assigned the work to Shama, with the words, "You take this book home and keep it protected, wrapped in cloth"?
62. Just as Shama was an ardent devotee, so was Baba's love for him. A desire, therefore, arose in Baba to put him to some regular practice for his spiritual progress.
63. So, see what he did. Though Shama had no inclination, yet he was favoured and graced. Listen under what circumstances, it was done.
64. One day, in the *Masjid*, there was a Ramdasi Bua. It was his regular practice to read the 'Ramayana'.
65. Early morning, after doing his ablutions, taking his bath and doing the *Sandhya* [5] after applying the sacred ashes and wearing ochre robes, he sat at a fixed place to read.
66. He read the 'Vishnusahasranama and Adhyatma Ramayan'[6], thereafter. He read these books often and often; and it continued with full faith!
67. In this way, after quite a long time had passed and the opportune time for Madhavrao had come, something occurred to Sai *Samartha*. Listen to that story.
68. Madhavrao's services had borne fruit. It was time now to put him into some regular practice and give him some *prasad* of the path of devotion, so that he would get relief in the worldly life.

69. When Baba thought like this, he called the Ramdasi near him and said: "I have a shooting pain in my stomach. It is as if the intestines are tearing apart.
70. "Go, this pain in the stomach is not abating. Quickly bring some senna pods. Unless I take some small quantity, this vexing ache will not stop".
71. The simple Ramdasi was a loving devotee. He put a mark in the book and set it aside. He went running to the market in obedience to Baba's command.
72. No sooner had the Ramdasi come down the steps, see what Baba did! He got up from his seat immediately and went near the books.
73. There amongst other religious books was the book on 'Vishnusahasranama'. He picked it up, took it in his hands and returned to his seat.
74. And said: "Shama, you know this *pothi*. See it is very beneficial. Therefore, I am giving it to you. You should read it.
75. "Once I suffered intensely. My heart began to palpitate. I was restless and I had no hope for myself.
76. "Shama what can I tell you of that experience? How that book proved useful! This life was saved by it.
77. "I hugged it to my heart for a while and immediately felt relief. It seemed as if *Allah* himself had come down and this life was saved by it.
78. "Therefore Shama take it with you. Read it gradually. Every day, take one or two words. It will give you great joy".
79. Shama said: "I do not want it. The Ramdasi will be furious with me and he will say that I have behind his back, done this wrong.
80. "As it is, he is half-crazy, irascible, ill-tempered and ever complaining. Why, unnecessarily, pick up this quarrel with him? I do not want this annoyance.
81. "Besides, the *pothi* is in Sanskrit. My speech is crude and rustic. My tongue cannot twist round these joined words. I cannot pronounce them clearly".
82. Seeing all Baba's actions, Shama thought that Baba wanted to set him up against the Ramdasi but he had no idea of Baba's heart-felt concern for him.
83. 'My Shama may be mad but I am fond of him. He has an unusual affection towards me. I am greatly concerned about him.
84. 'I will tie the necklace of this *Vishnusahasranama* around his neck

with my hands and free him from the miseries of the worldly existence by giving him a fondness for reciting it.

85. 'God's Name can break down mountains of sin. The Lord's Name breaks the shackles of the body. God's Name pulls out crores of ill desires from their roots.

86. 'God's Name humbles the pride of death and ends the cycle of birth and death. I want Shama to be interested in this treasure of the *Sahasranama*.

87. 'The Lord's Name chanted with full intent is very effective but even an unintentional pronouncement can be beneficial. Its power is manifested even when it is uttered unawares.

88. 'For the purification of the Inner Self there is not another simpler means than chanting the Lord's Name. The Lord's Name is the adornment of the tongue. The Lord's Name sustains spirituality.

89. 'It is not necessary to have a bath to say the Lord's Name. Taking the Lord's Name is not regulated by the rules of the *Shastras*. The Lord's Name destroys all sins. The Lord's Name is always pure.

90. 'The continuous chanting of My Name itself will ferry you across the ocean of existence. No other means are necessary to achieve salvation.

91. 'Whoever frequently repeats My Name his sins will be burnt. I consider him more virtuous than the virtuous, who constantly hums My name'.

92. This was Baba's inner motive and he acted accordingly. Even though Shama refused, Baba slipped it into his pocket.

93. Shama's ancestors must have indeed performed good deeds the fruits of which he received in this blessing. This pure *Sahasranama* was sure to remove his wordly afflictions.

94. All other religious performances have to be done as per the rules laid down in the *Shastras*. But the Lord's Name can be chanted continuously at any time. It has no limitations on account of the day being a holiday or the time being the evening worship of Shiva. There is not another simple method to adopt.

95. In the same way, Eknath forced this *Sahasranama* on his neighbour and thrust him on the virtuous path.

96. Holy scriptures were read daily at Nath's house. But this neighbour, though a Brahmin, remained unclean and did not perform the *sandhya*. He indulged in evil actions.

97. He never listened to the reading of the scriptures as this wicked

person did not even step into Nath's *wada*. Nath himself took pity on him and called him over to his house.

98. 'Though he is born in a high caste, his life is being wasted'. Knowing this sensitive issue, Nath felt great pity. 'How can this be averted?' he thought.

99. Therefore, even though he refused, Nath made him commit to memory with proper ennunciation, the *Sahasranama*, one *shloka* at a time and thus uplifted him.

100. The reading and study of this *Sahasranama* is a broad open way of purifying the mind and is of ancient origin, which was Baba's reason for forcing it on Shama.

101. That Ramadasi returned soon bringing the senna-pods medicine. Anna[7], who was a mischief maker like Narad, was standing near by and described, in detail, what had happened.

102. The Ramdasi was, as it is, ill-tempered. Moreover, there was Narad's intervention. Then who would be able to describe in apt words, the uncommon incident?

103. The Ramdasi was always a doubting Thomas; and he had suspicions about Madhavrao. He said: "He made Baba the intermediary to snatch away my book".

104. The senna pods were forgotten. He launched a vicious verbal attack on Madhavrao. His violent anger was uncontrollable and he showered a lot of abusive language on him.

105. "The stomach ache was just a pretext. It was you who instigated Baba. You had an eye on my book. I will not tolerate it.

106. "I am a fearless Ramdasi, as my name itself suggests. If you do not return the book without creating any problems, I will dash my head in front of you and scatter my blood profusely.

107. "You coveted my book, planned out this insidious drama, and putting the whole blame on Baba, kept yourself aloof".

108. Madhavrao tried his best to make him understand but the Ramdasi would not be pacified. Then listen to what Madhavrao said very calmly.

109. "Do not falsely accuse me of being deceitful. Why are you fussing so much about that book of yours? It is not a rarity.

110. "Is your book decorated with gold and studded with gems? If you don't have faith in Baba, despicable is your existence".

111. Seeing the Ramdasi's insistence, Baba very sweetly said to him: "Oh, Ramdasi, what is the problem? Why are you unnecessarily distressed?

112. "Is not Shama our lad? Why do you quarrel loudly and vehemently, for no reason creating a scene?

113. "Why are you always ready to fight? Can you not speak soft and sweet words? Though you read these books regularly, your mind is still impure.

114. "Every day you read the 'Adhyatma Ramayan' and recite the 'Sahasranama'. Yet you have not discarded your passions which are uncontrolled. And you call yourself a Ramdasi.

115. "What kind of a Ramdasi are you? You should be absolutely detached; but you are not able to overcome your intense desire to possess the book. What name can be given for this behaviour?

116. "A true Ramdasi should have no attachment but look at the young and old with equality. You are harbouring enmity for this boy and coming to blows for this book.

117. Go and sit in your place. Books can be had in plenty for money but not men, till the end of time. Remember this well.

118. "Shama has no knowledge about the worth of your book. I picked it up, on my own and gave it to him myself.

119. "You know the book by heart. I thought of giving it to Shama who will read it, repeatedly recite it and obtain the utmost benefit".

120. How captivating were the words, sweet and full of compassion, as also soothing and blissfully serene. They were non-pareil.

121. Ramdasi realised the situation. Yet he said to Madhavrao red with anger: "Instead of this book, I will take 'Panch-ratni Gita' from you. I am telling you clearly now".

122. Madhavrao was pleased that the Ramdasi was pacified. "Why one, I will give you ten copies of the *Gita*, instead."

123. Be it so. The dispute was thus resolved. The *Gita* was accepted as security. But why did a man unacquainted with the deity in the *Geeta* demand it?

124. One who constantly read the 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in front of Sai, why should that Ramdasi be rude to Baba and quarrel right in front of him?

125. How can I say that? Who should be blamed and why? If what had transpired had not taken place, how would the importance of the subject been brought home?

126. That book which was the cause of such a big quarrel was also the reliever of Baba's pain. It is also now the cause of my well-being. Invaluable is Sai's gift.

127. If this great effort had not been made, Madhavrao would not have had faith in it. Truly, he would not have been able to pronounce the words nor been able to recite it.

128. This Sainath, how loving he was! A rare teacher of spirituality with pranks! No one could understand how and when he would practise this art. His ways were incomprehensible.

129. Later on, Shama's faith was developed. Dixit and Narke[8] taught him to pronounce the words correctly, by repeating and conning them over and over again and to know their meanings. He learnt the book by heart.

130. Be it so. This conversation between Sai and Madhavrao is a clarification of Baba's pure and simple advice. It is full of great joy. Undoubtedly it was a pleasing entertainment.

131. Similarly, Baba greatly loved those who studied metaphysics. See how he showed that love when the opportunity arose!

132. Once a parcel came for Jog at the Shirdi post-office. In order to receive it, he hurriedly went there.

133. He found it to contain the commentary of Lokmanya Tilak, named 'Gita Rahasya'. Carrying it under his arm, he came for the *darshan* to the *Masjid*.

134. When bowing down his head to pay obeisance, the parcel also fell down at Baba's feet. Baba asked then, "Bapusaheb, what and whose is this?"

135. He opened the parcel in his presence, and explained about the book. He placed the parcel in Baba's hands with the book "and Baba looked at it".

136. Baba took it out (from the parcel) and held it in his hands leafing through the pages. He took out one rupee from his pocket and placed it on the book with admiration.

137. The book along with the rupee was handed over to Jog and he said: "Read it from the beginning to the end. You will be benefitted".

138. There are innumerable such stories of Baba's grace or grant of favour. But this book would be too lengthy. Therefore, I relate briefly, and only a few.

139. Once it so happened in Shirdi that Dadasaheb Khaparde came, and stayed with his whole family. He was steeped in Baba's love.

140. Khaparde was not an ordinary man. He was very learned and a person of superior status. When he was near Sai, he stood with folded hands and with his head bowed very low at Baba's feet.

141. He was thoroughly versed in the English language and was

well-known in the Council of State. He was an eloquent speaker but before Sai he did not speak.

142. Of the numerous devotees of Baba, there were none except Khaparde, Noolkar and Butti who remained silent before him.

143. The rest of them talked with Baba, and some even argued with him, without the least fear and self-consciousness. But these three remained silent as if they had taken a vow.

144. There was no question of their talking. Before Baba they did not even raise their heads. Their humility cannot be described. They listened to him also, meekly.

145. Dadasaheb who was able to expound *Vidyaranya's* 'Panchdashi' to others, uttered not a single word as soon as he came to the *Masjid*.

146. The lustre of the *Vedas*, however bright it may be, loses its brilliance in the presence of pure *Brahman*. Sai was the embodiment of the brilliant *Parbrahma* and learning is abashed before him.

147. Khaparde stayed for four months but his wife stayed on for seven months. Both of them experienced a new joy each day.

148. His wife was very devout and had immense love for Sai. Every day she would bring *naivedya* to *Masjid* with her own hands.

149. Until Maharaj did not accept the *naivedya*, the lady remained hungry. After he had eaten, she would eat.

150. Be it whatsoever. An occasion arose for Baba, who was very loving to his devotees, to show an easy and pure path, seeing the lady's unstinted faith.

151. Different Saints have different ways. Baba's were absolutely novel. He granted grace or favours in a playful, humorous manner which left a firm impression.

152. Once, the lady brought a platter filled with *sanza, sheera-puri, bhat, varan, kheer, sandge, papad, koshimbiri* [9].

153. As soon as this platter came, Baba most eagerly got up from his seat, rolling up the sleeves of his *kafni*.

154. He went and sat down at his usual place for eating, pulled the platter in front of him, took off the outer cover and got ready to eat.

155. Many other *naivedyas* came, far superior to this one. Often they remained untouched. What was the greatly impelling reason to eat this only?

156. Why should such a worldly attitude affect a Saint? Madhavraoji asked Sai *Samartha* : "Why should there be such a distinction?

157. You keep aside all the other platters. Even if some are made of silver, you hurl them far away. But, only when this lady's platter came, you got up immediately and started eating. This is surprising!
158. Why is her food so delicious? *Deva*, this is a great mystery to us. There is some stratagem of yours, here! Why should you have such likes and dislikes?"
159. Baba said: "What can I say about the surpassing quality of this food? In her earlier birth, this lady was a very fat cow belonging to a merchant, yielding much milk.
160. Then, she disappeared and took birth in a gardener's family. Later she was reborn in a *Kshatriya* family and got married to a merchant.
161. Then, she was born in a Brahmin family. I saw her after a very long time. Let me take a few morsels of food, she has offered with love, with contentment".
162. After saying this, he did full justice to the meal, washed his hands and mouth, belched to show his satisfaction and resumed his seat.
163. The lady did an obeisance and started gently pressing Sai's feet. Baba took the opportunity to give her some beneficial advice.
164. While the lady pressed Baba's feet, he in turn, pressed those hands which served him. Seeing this reciprocity of service between *Deva* and devotee, Shama joked about it.
165. "It is going on well, *Deva*! It is a pleasurable sight to see this reciprocal devotion. It is marvelous to behold".
166. Considering her service, Baba was pleased with her and softly told her to keep on repeating "*Rajaram*, *Rajaram*".
167. "Keep chanting this always. Oh, mother, your life's objective will be achieved, your mind will be at peace, and you will be immensely benefitted".
168. How potent were those words! They penetrated her heart and became embedded there. Through these words, Baba had instantly imparted *Shakti – pata*[10].
169. Such was Sree *Samartha* the compassionate! Sainath, the protector of all who have surrendered! He always fulfils the devotees' cherished desires and works for their welfare.
170. Whatever further I say, bear it in mind, as it is spoken with great love, humility and for the welfare of the listeners. I make this request because of our close bond.
171. As an ant is addicted to the sweetness in the jaggery, even if its head is broken, you should be enjoined to the feet of Sai. He will protect you with utmost care.

172. The Guru and the devotee are not separate, though they appear different or distinct. He who attempts to separate them forcefully is bound to be humiliated.

173. Both are one and one cannot live without the other. If the Guru is imperfect, the disciple is the same. But for one who has learnt at the hands of an able Guru, the very thought of duality does not exist.

174. The Guru lives in one place and his disciple at another, He who likes it thus, then their relationship is only for appearance's sake.

175. If essentially they are not two, how can they be separate. One cannot exist without the other; both are so inseparable!

176. There is no difference between the Guru and the devotee; thus they are continuously together. The devotee placing his head on the Guru*'s* feet is a gesture of worship or outward vision.

177. The devotee is one with the Guru in his one-pointed worship, and the Guru is in union with his devotee. If they are not completely one with one another in this way, then the relationship is not worth its name.

178. How would one obtain food and clothing? Do not waste even a moment thinking over it. It all depends upon destiny and can be obtained without efforts.

179. If you make efforts to obtain them, they could be in vain. Make efforts only to achieve spirituality. Strive for it, day and night.

180. 'Get up' and arise. Why are you snoring in deep sleep? Such is the resounding cry of the *Shruti* [11] which lovingly wakes up the devotees.

181. The root cause of all calamities is ignorance. Those who are rolling in the sleep of ignorance should wake up before it is too late and partake of the nectar of knowledge from the Guru.

182. Therefore, with great humility, go and surrender at the Guru's feet. He alone knows what is right and what is wrong. We are unknowing children.

183. The *jeeva* (individual) is proud of its little knowledge. Shiva (God) who is all-knowing is without ego. Only the Guru can reconcile the difference and show that they are one.

184. *Jeeva* is the *Atma* troubled by ignorance, while Shiva is the *Atma* troubled by *Maya*. Only the *Samartha* Guru is capable of eliminating the distinction between the two.

185. Surrender the vacillating mind at Sai's feet. Then, he will be the doer of the actions that arise by his inspiration.

186. Similarly, surrender the initiative and energy to act to Sai. Then behave according to his will.

187. Know that Sai's power prevails everywhere, so leave all the burden on him performing all your actions without pride. You will surely gain success.

188. Should you even with a trace of pride think, 'I will do this', the consequences will become apparent immediately. There will be not a moment's delay.

189. While Hemad was lazily turning and twisting, from one side to the other, in the sleep of illusion and fascination, he received the grace of God and Guru.

190. It can only be ascribed to destiny since no study nor efforts were made. God and Guru, it seems, bestowed this honour for their own design.

191. Sai wanted his life story to be written for the upliftment of the devotees, therefore, forcibly holding the hand, he got this book written in detail.

192. Weaving a beautiful garland with the thread of constant meditation and different flowers of love of variegated hues, let us offer it to Sai.

193. Let us attain the throne of Self-Realisation and occupy it with splendour. Let us enjoy the heavenly bliss, devoid of pride and be contented within.

194. This life story of Sai is unfathomable. The next story is more marvellous than this one. Become very attentive for a while to listen to this purifying tale.

195. In the next three chapters, Baba through the experience of visions, shows marvels, while he remained where he was.

196. The first of these chapters deals with Lala Lakhmichand, who was drawn by a string of love and shown his proper place;

197. about the lady from Burhanpur whose *Khichadi* [12] he wanted to eat and, therefore, made her long for *darshan* and showed the marvel of love;

198. and later how Megha was asked to draw a trident in his dream; and how he received the *Shiva-linga* a unexpectedly afterwards.

199. So many similar stories will follow after that. If the listeners hear them with devotion, they will be benefitted.

200. As salt dissolves in the ocean, so Hemad surrenders to Sai, with the

feeling of oneness and union. He does obeisance to him whole-heartedly.

201. Moreover, he lovingly pleads that he may think day and night of Sai, and that nothing else may enter his mind, which should be always alert.

202. May the past life be obliterated and the future be annihilated. In this life, may he spend it at the Guru's feet.

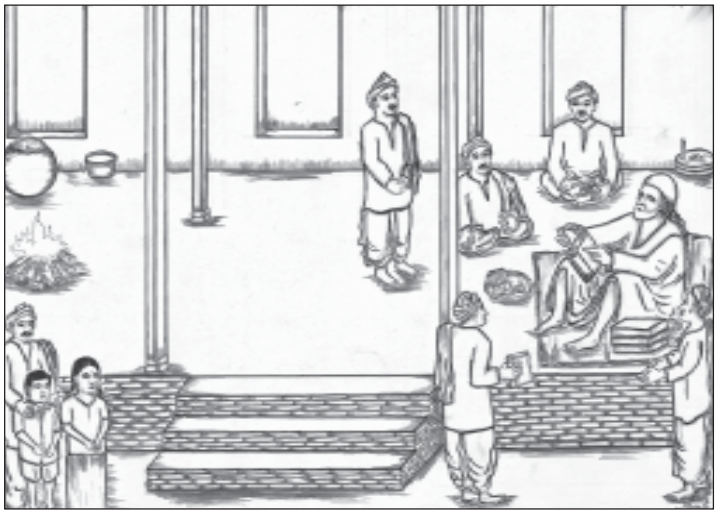
May there be well-being. This is the end of the twenty seventh chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita* written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Bestowal of Initiation and Grace".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

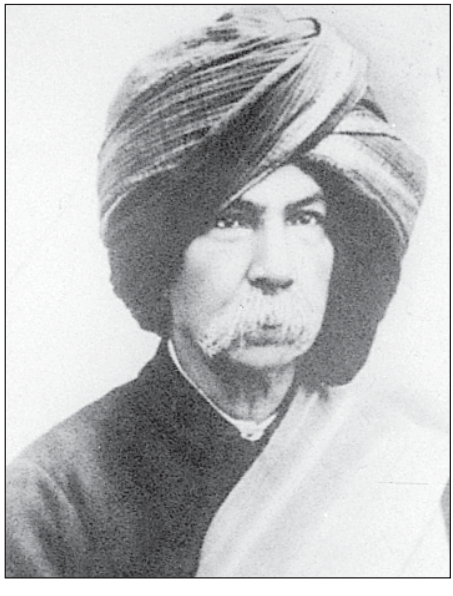
May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. This contradicts what is stated in Chapter 5 about Baba coming with the marriage party.
2. The ten incarnations of Vishnu as Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, *Vaman* the Dwarf, Parshuram, Ram, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki yet to manifest in the future.
3. A compilation of five jewels from the Mahabharat namely a) Srimad Bhagvat *Gita*, b) *Sree Vishnu Saharsranam Stotra,* c) *Bhishma Stavaraj,* d) *Anusmruti*, e) *Gajendra Moksha*.
4. Written by Mukundraj in 1188, i.e. more than 100 years before *Dñyaneshwari*, on Adwait, in Marathi.
5. Religious meditation and repetition of *mantras* in the early morning and at other fixed times.
6. Esoteric version of Ram's story.
7. Chinchanikar.
8. Professor Ganesh Govind Narke, son-in-law of Butti, of the Engineering College, Pune.
9. *Sanza* = wheat pudding.
   Sheera-puri = cream of wheat with jaggery and *ghee* and puffed wheat cake fried in oil
   Bhat = rice
   Varan = highly tasteful dish of pulses
   Kheer = rice, milk and sugar dish
   Sandge = seasoned salad of cucumber, red pumpkin etc.
   Papad = thin, crisp cake of urad
   Koshimbiri = raw fruit or vegetables pickled or preserved.
10. Transference of power from the Guru to the disciple, which is effected by touch, words or even a mere glance.
11. *Kathanopanishad*.
12. A dish cooked of a mixture of rice and *dal*.



At the opportune time, he would put the book in Baba's hands. Just as Baba knew the importance of the book, he also knew about the devotee's abilities. (Ch.27, ovi 41)



Dadasaheb Khaparade

28

Narration of Visions

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Sai is not confined to one place. Sai dwells in all creation from Brahma to small creatures like ants and flies. He pervades all and is everywhere.
2. Sai was well-versed in the *Vedas*; and had all the attributes of the Absolute *Brahman*. As he was proficient in both, he was well-fitted to be the *Sadguru*.
3. One may be very learned but not able to awaken the disciple or establish him in Self-realisation, then he does not deserve to be called *Sadguru*.
4. A father gives birth to the body, and death invariably follows life. The Guru releases you from birth and death, so his comparison is greater than any one else's.
5. Now listen to the chapter on dreams with reference to the earlier context, of how Baba gave *darshan* to his devotees by appearing in their dreams.
6. He asked one to draw a trident; and another was asked for *khichadi* ; and still another was beaten with a stick on his back, in the form of his teacher.
7. He frightened somebody by appearing in his dream and made him leave his addiction for alcohol. Warding off many such problems of his devotees, he strengthened their devotion.
8. The listeners have already heard how he flayed the skin off someone's back with a cane and used his chest as a grinding stone and took another stone as a roller to grind. All this has been narrated in Chapter 10[1].
9. The stories that follow are rare and excellent. The listeners and the

narrator will be blessed, as they harmonise. They will have everlasting happiness.

10. Let me narrate these stories about saints, which are always very pure, which will wipe out the sins of listening to untruth, malicious remarks etc.
11. Now let me tell you those stories. Listeners should hear them with respect. They will reveal Sai's compassionate nature at every step.
12. The Ralli Brothers were Greek merchants, who bought things from all over India and had their business establishments in different cities out of which Bombay was one.
13. At that time, Lakhmichand worked under one of the officers there. He was very honest and obedient. He worked as a *Munshi*.
14. He worked with the Railways first, and then with Venkatesh Press. It was only then that he came in contact with Sai. Hear how it happened.
15. "My man can be in any place – even thousands of miles away. I will draw him to me with a string tied to his feet, like a sparrow fledgling".
16. Baba said these words often. People not only heard them frequently but also experienced that. I shall narrate that sport of Baba's.
17. Many such 'Children' from various places were brought to Shirdi, of whom Lakhmichand was one. He was a devoted 'child' of Baba.
18. We only meet a saint who dispels the darkness born of ignorance, when the good deeds of many lives are brought to the fore by fate.
19. The fire of discrimination is ignited when fortune favours and we gain detachment. The accumulated *karmas* of past births end and life becomes fulfilled.
20. Once Sainath fills the vision, there is no room for anyone else there. Even when the eyes are closed, it is Sainath that encompasses the vision.
21. I met Lalaji (Lakhmichand) and he narrated his experiences, which I have treasured in my heart with great love. I shall narrate them with eagerness.
22. See how he was caught! That *leela* is unparalleled. Devoted listeners hear it with complete concentration.
23. It was during the Christmas holidays of 1910 that Lalaji got an opportunity to come to Shirdi.
24. That was the first time he had *darshan*. But let us hear what happened to him a couple of months earlier to give indication of this event.
25. When he was at Santacruz, he had a strange dream all of a sudden, about a matter which had never entered his mind before.

26. He saw a bearded old *sadhu* surrounded by devotees. This *mahatma* was standing thus, to whom he paid his loving reverence.

27. Some time later Lakhmichand went to the house of Dattatreya Manjunath Bijur, to hear the *kirtan* of Das Ganu.

28. It was always the practice of Das Ganu to keep Baba's picture in front of him. Immediately on seeing it, Lakhmichand was reminded of the man he had seen in his dream.

29. It was the same beard, the same age, the same features and limbs. Lakhmichand concentrated and felt that this was the same *mahatma*.

30. To begin with it was Das Ganu's *kirtan*, in which there was the apologue of Tukaram, and then the *darshan* of the *sadhu* of his dream. Lalaji was deeply engrossed.

31. Lakhmichand, who was very tender hearted, had loving tears in his eyes. He yearned to meet and see the personage in the picture.

32. He had no other thought in his mind except that of the person he saw earlier in his dream and whose picture he had seen in the *kirtan*. His inner inclination was fixed there only.

33. 'Will I meet a friend who will accompany me to Shirdi? When will I put my head in person at this saint's feet.

34. 'Will I ever be able to have the *darshan* of this *sadhu*? Will I ever be able to enjoy the bliss of his love?' Such was Lakhmichand's constant longing.

35. 'The money for the expenses must also be arranged. Then, what should be done next? How will the *darshan* be obtained quickly? Some method will have to be found'.

36. God always longs for love. See what a miracle happened! That same night, around eight o'clock, a friend knocked at his door.

37. Then, when he opened the door and looked, he saw his friend Shankar Rao, who asked Lakhmichand if he would like to go to Shirdi.

38. "I had planned to go to Kedgaon for the *darshan* of Narayan Maharaj. But I had a strong desire to go to Shirdi first".

39. One has to make efforts to get what one desires; but the chance for which he was waiting fell right into his lap! Lakhmichand could not contain his joy!

40. He borrowed fifteen rupees from his cousin. Shankar Rao did the same. They made preparations for the departure.

41. They got together their bag and baggage and got ready to leave. They went in time to get the tickets and both caught the train.

42. Shankar Rao was a good singer of *bhajans* and both sang in the train. Lakhmichand, out of curiosity, made inquiries on the way.
43. If he met anyone going to Shirdi, he would greet them on meeting them and say: "Tell us about Sai Baba's greatness according to your experience.
44. "Sai Baba is a great saint and well-known near Nagar", he said. "Tell us clearly of some personal experience".
45. In the compartment there were four Muslims who lived near Shirdi. Lakhmichand felt contented on conversing and gossiping with them.
46. "Tell us anything you may know about Sai Baba", Lakhmichand asked them with devotion and love.
47. "Sai Baba is a great saint and has lived in Shirdi for many years. He is a great *aulia* and sage", they replied.
48. Thus in happy conversation, they completed the journey till both of them reached Kopergaon. There, the Sheth was reminded of something.
49. 'Sai Baba likes guavas and they grow in Kopergaon. It is said that they are sold on the banks of the Godavari; so we will offer them to Baba.'
50. But when they came to the banks of the Godavari, he was so fascinated by the scenic view that he forgot all about the guavas till the tonga reached the opposite bank.
51. From there Shirdi was only four villages away and the tonga was at full speed. Lakhmichand then remembered the guavas where there were none to be seen.
52. At that moment, an old woman with a basket on her head was seen running after the tonga. The carriage was stopped for her and it seemed as if the guavas had come to meet him.
53. Lakhmichand was filled with joy. He selected the guavas with care. For those that remained in the basket, the old woman asked them to offer to Baba, on her behalf.
54. Remembering the guavas and then forgetting about them. The unnexpected meeting with the old woman and seeing her devotion to Sai. All this surprised both of them.
55. First I saw an old man in a dream. Then, encountered him at the *kirtan*. This old woman must be some relative of his, guessed Lakhmichand.
56. May it be whatsoever. The *tonga* continued the journey and they reached Shirdi in no time. They saw the flags above the *masjid* from afar and they both bowed with devotion.

57. They took all the necessary items for the *puja* and went to the *Masjid* immediately. They felt very happy after taking Sai's *darshan*.
58. Entering the courtyard from the entrance door and seeing Baba's form from a distance they were in a deep emotional state.
59. On having the *darshan* of the desired personage, Lakhmichand was totally absorbed. He forgot hunger and thirst and was in supreme bliss[3].
60. Taking clean water in his hands, he washed Baba's lotus feet and did *puja* in the traditional way. Then he offered bananas and coconut.
61. He offered incense, waived light, *betel* leaf and made a monetary offering; mentally circumambulated, offered a garland of flowers and then, sat near his feet.
62. Lakhmichand being a loving devotee basked in the grace of his guru; and having attained Sai's lotus feet hovered over them like a bee.
63. Then Baba began to speak (in Hindi): "The rascal sang *bhajans* on the way and made inquiries of others. Why ask others?
64. "See everything with your eyes. Why ask anyone else? Is the dream true or not? Come to your own decision.
65. "What was the necessity of coming for *darshan* after borrowing money from a *marwadi*? Is your heart's desire fulfilled now?" They were stupefied by these words.
66. Lakhmichand felt very greatly surprised that Baba should have the knowledge here of the inquiries, he had made on the way.
67. 'I had a dream at home. I did *bhajans* on the train. How did Baba come to know about it? How amazing is the knowledge of the secrets of the heart!
68. 'He also knows that in my eagerness for *darshan*, I borrowed money to make up the full amount as there was shortage of money'.
69. Lakhmichand was greatly surprised; and so were all the devotees gathered there. All the bees hovering at the lotus feet felt that Baba's knowledge was beyond imagination.
70. The principal lesson was that Baba did not like running into a debt to celebrate a festival or go on a holiday or a pilgrimage.
71. So be it. With all the devotees, Lakhmichand went to *Sathe's Vada*. In the afternoon he sat for lunch with great joy.
72. At that time, some devotee brought *sanza* as Baba's prasad, and distributed a little to each one, on the leaf (used as lunch plate). He enjoyed this very much.

73. The next day, at mealtime, Lalaji recalled the *sanza* but it was not available every day. So he was anxious to get it again.

74. But on the third day, there was a marvel. Maharaj Sai granted his unfulfilled craving. See how he arranged it!

75. Jog came to the *Masjid* with sandalwood paste, consecrated rice, flowers, bell, '*niranjan*' and the five-wick lamp etc. and asked Baba:

76. "What should I bring for *naivedya* to-day?" Maharaj instructed: "Bring me a platterful of *sanza*. You can do the arati and puja later".

77. Leaving the *puja* paraphernalia there, Jog immediately went back and returned in no time bringing *sheera* with him, enough for everybody.

78. Then the noon *arati* took place. The platters of *naivedyas* brought by the devotees, earlier, were being sent up. Then Baba said to his devotees.

79. "To-day is a good fine day, I have felt that *sanza* should be to-day's *prasad*. So get it quickly. Everyone should eat it to their heart's content".

80. Then the devotees went and brought two big pots full of '*sanza*'. Lakhmichand felt hungry and he also had a pain in the back.

81. Lakhmichand was uncomfortable on account of his hunger and back ache. Then listen with care to the words that came from Baba's lips.

82. "It is good that you are hungry. But the pain in the back needs medicine. *Sanza* has arrived in abundance. Get up for the *arati* ". (in Hindi).

83. Baba's words were an echo of Lakhmichand's thoughts, without him having made a sound. Maharaj was a knower of the secrets of the heart!

84. May it be so. After the *arati*, *sanza* was served at the time of lunch. Lakhmichand's craving was satisfied. He was happy.

85. Since then he was devoted to Baba. He regularly offered *agarbattis*, coconut and garland. Lakhmichand also prospered. The *puja* was regular and ritualistic.

86. He developed such a devotion for Sai that whenever he found someone going to Shridi, he sent along with him garland, *dakshina*, camphor and *agarbattis*.

87. Whenever Lakhmichand came to know that someone was going to Shirdi he sent these three things with *dakshina* for Baba, without fail.

88. On that trip, when Lakhmichand went to see the *Chavadi* procession, Baba started coughing and breathed hard with distress.
89. Lakhmichand thought, 'how this cough is troubling him! It seems that somebody has cast an evil eye! And that is why he is coughing'.
90. This was only a thought that arose in Lakhmichand's mind. The next morning, when he came to the *Masjid*, how surprising it is that Baba said the same thing, translating his thought in speech.
91. When Madhavrao came, Baba spoke to him on his own, "Yesterday, I had a lot of coughing. Is it because of somebody's evil eye?
92. "I feel that somebody has cast an evil eye on me. Therefore, this cough is frequently worrying me and making me suffer".
93. Lakhmichand was surprised at this repetition of his own thoughts. 'How did Baba know this? Is he all pervasive?'
94. Then folding his hands, he supplicated him. "I am very pleased with your *darshan*. Therefore, continue to grant me this favour and protect me, Maharaj.
95. "Now, there is no other God except these feet. Let my mind be ever absorbed in your worship and at your feet always".
96. He said: "I lay my head now at your feet; and ask for your permission to leave, Sai *Samartha*. Now, grant it to us and look to me always with the same kindness.
97. "Let your continuing grace keep me free from all worldly problems. Let the chanting of your name fulfil us and give us happiness and contentment always".
98. Lakhmichand returned after receiving *udi* and blessings, with his friend, and joyfully sang about Sai's glory on the way home.
99. Similarly, another 'sparrow' was tied and brought to Shirdi by Baba, when the time was right for *darshan*. Listen to that novel way.
100. This 'sparrow'was a loving lady. Her story is very wonderful. She lived in Burhanpur, where she saw Sai Maharaj in a dream.
101. She had never seen Baba in person; but still she had a dream that Baba has come and is standing at her door, asking for a meal of *khichadi*.
102. She woke up immediately but found no one at that place. She told about her dream to everyone promptly.
103. Her husband was an official in the Postal Department of the same town. Later he was transferred to Akola and they made preparations to visit Shirdi.
104. The couple was very devout and became anxious for Sai's *darshan*.

They were curious about the dream and felt that Sai's *leelas* were inexplicable.

105. So, on a convenient day, they left for Shirdi. On the way they paid their homage at the Gomati *Tirth*[4] and reached Shirdi.

106. They took Baba's *darshan* with love and worshipped him with devotion. Serving at Baba's feet regularly, they were full of happiness.

107. Thus the couple stayed happily at Shirdi for two months. Baba was also satisfied with the *khichadi* meal and their faith and devotion.

108. The couple came to Shirdi to offer *khichadi* as *naivedya*. But though a fortnight had passed, the *khichadi* was not offered as *naivedya*.

109. There was a delay in fulfilling the determined resolution and the lady did not like it. On the fifteenth day, at noon time, she came with the *khichadi*.

110. The curtains were already drawn and Baba had already sat down for the meal with his devotees. The lady understood this.

111. When the meal was in progress, no one went beyond the curtains. But the lady was eager and she would not remain quiet in the courtyard.

112. She had come to Shirdi from Akola with the enthusiasm of offering *khichadi*. How can its acceptance remain unfulfilled, was her anxiety!

113. Without listening to anyone, she raised the curtains with her own hands and without taking anyone's permission she entered and fulfilled her wish.

114. Then, Baba did something wonderful. He longed so much for *khichadi* that he asked for it to be served first and held the platter with both hands.

115. He was delighted to see the *khichadi*. Taking morsel after morsel, Baba fed himself. Everyone was wonder struck.

116. Seeing Baba's eagerness, everybody was surprised. Then, when they heard the story about the *khichadi* they realised Sai's inexplicable behaviour.

117. Now after hearing the next story, you will be choked with emotion. A Gujarati Brahmin came unexpectedly to Shirdi, to serve.

118. He had been employed earlier by Rao Bahadur Sathe. He could reach Baba's feet due to his honest services.

119. This story is also very interesting. The Lord fulfils the desire of anyone who has an inclination for loving devotion. Listen to it.

120. His name was Megha. He attained a place at Shirdi because of some

connection with Sai in his previous birth. Get ready to listen to the story.

121. Sathe was an officer of Kheda *Jhilla*, where he came across Megha, unexpectedly. He employed him for doing regular Shiva *puja*.

122. Later, this Sathe came to Shirdi; and this is what changed his fortunes. He came in close contact with Sai Maharaj there and was deeply devoted to his feet.

123. Seeing the large crowds of those who came for pilgrimage, he decided to have his own *wada* there for the convenience of the visitors who came with family and friends.

124. Then he met the leading villagers and acquired that piece of land where Baba had first been seen. It was decided to build the *wada* there.

125. The importance of this holy piece of land has been fully described in the fourth chapter. So there is no need for repetition. Let us continue the narration.

126. Megha's merits of past life were great because of which he came in contact with Rao Bahadur Sathe. It was then only that he started making spiritual progress, thanks to Sathe's efforts.

127. Due to circumstances, Megha was unable to perform the prescribed rituals. By having him taught the *Gayatri Mantra*, Sathe made him follow the righteous path.

128. Megha started serving Sathe and this caused their mutual respect to grow. Megha regarded Sathe as a Guru and developed affection for him.

129. So be it. Once when Sathe was casually talking and describing the greatness of his own Guru, he was choked with emotion and he respectfully asked Megha:

130. "I have a strong desire to bathe Baba with water from the Godavari. Therefore, I am sending you to Shirdi, specifically for this purpose.

131. "Besides, seeing your whole-hearted devotion, I feel that you should be associated with *Sadguru* and develop a devotion at his feet.

132. "The purpose of your life will be fulfilled and you will attain supreme well-being. Go, go and surrender with your whole being to the *Sadguru*".

133. Megha asked him about Baba's caste. In reality, Sathe had no knowledge of it. He said: "Some call him a Muslim because he sits in a Masjid".

134. At the word, 'Muslim', Megha's mind wavered. None could be lower than a Muslim! What sort of a Guru could he be!

135. He knew that Sathe would get annoyed if he refused but was convinced that he would spiritually fall very low if he agreed. He was very confused and was worried.

136. He was between the devil and the deep sea[5]. He was wavering and uneasy. But Sathe insisted a lot so he decided to take *darshan*.

137. Then Megha came to Shirdi and arrived at the courtyard of the *Masjid*. As he started to climb the steps, Baba started his *leela*.

138. He became wild with rage and picking up a stone in his hand said: "Beware, if you put your feet on the steps! This place is inhabited by a Muslim.

139. "You are a high caste Brahmin and I the lowest of the low, a Muslim! You will be defiled, Go back!"

140. That angry form was like another *Rudra*, at the time of the dissolution of the world. The onlookers trembled with fear and Megha was quaking.

141. But this anger was superficial. Inwardly, he was overflowing with compassion. Megha was filled with surprise and was perplexed: 'How did he come to know my inner thoughts?

142. 'The distance between Khedgaon and Ahmednagar is considerable. It seems that he wants to expose my mind, full of doubts'.

143. As Baba ran forward to strike him, Megha's courage failed him. He moved backwards, with every step, and had no courage to move forward.

144. He remained, in this manner, for some days. He observed Baba in various moods. He rendered whatever service he could, but did not develop full faith.

145. Later he returned home where he fell sick and was confined to bed. There he began to contemplate upon Baba and came back to Shirdi.

146. At that time when he came, he continued to stay there. He became devoted to Sai. He became a dedicated devotee of Sai. There was no deity for him other than Sai.

147. Megha was already a Shankar devotee. When he got attached to Sai's feet, he looked on Sainath as 'Shankar'. He was his 'Umanath'.

148. Megha continuously chanted 'Sai-Shankar' day and night, and his inner self was merged in this form. His mind was pure and free of sin.

149. He became a dedicated devotee of Sai. He felt that Sai was 'Shankar' himself. His chant of 'Shankar – Shankar' reverberated. He did not believe in any other deity.

150. Worship of Sai was worship of God to him. Sai was his 'Girija Raman'[6].

With this idea firmly rooted in his mind, Megha remained always happy.

151. Shankar likes *bel* leaves but there were no *bel* trees in Shirdi. Therefore, Megha went for a *koss* or *koss* and a half to fulfil his desire of offering these leaves.

152. For him a *koss* or two was nothing. He was ready even to cross a mountain for *bel*, for he would have fulfilled his desire to do *puja* as he wanted it to be done.

153. He would bring the *bel* from long distances, get together all the *puja* paraphernalia completely, and then worship all the village deities, one by one. He would offer to all according to the proper rituals.

154. After that, he would come immediately to the *Masjid*, lovingly bow to Baba's seat, wash his feet etc. and then drink the water as *tirth*.

155. Further stories about Megha will be delightful to listen. They will show Sai's all-pervasiveness and reverence for the village deities.

156. Till Megha was in Shirdi, he performed the noon *arati* regularly. But, before that he worshipped all the village deities and then went to the *Masjid*.

157. This was his regular routine. But, on one day this pattern was broken. He could not worship Khandoba though he made the efforts.

158. He tried to do the *puja* but the door (of the temple) did not open inspite of his efforts. Therefore, he omitted that and came (to the *Masjid*) to do the *arati*.

159. That moment Baba said to him: "To-day there is a break in your *puja*. You have worshipped all the deities but one has remained unworshipped.

160. "Go and do that and then come here". Megha replied: "The door was locked, and would not open though I tried. Therefore, I was forced to omit that *puja*."

161. Baba said: "Go and see. The door is open now". Megha went immediately, without wasting a moment, and found that the words were correct.

162. He worshipped Khanderaya and Megha also got rid of his uneasiness. Then Baba allowed Megha to do his *puja*.

163. Then, he did the *puja* with great reverence with sandalwood paste, flowers and the other eight offerings. He offered *dakshina*, garlands, fruits etc. according to his means.

164. On one 'Makar Sankranti' day, he felt like anointing Baba's whole

body with sandalwood paste and then giving him a bath with Godavari water.

165. He pestered Baba for permission, so Baba said: "Go and do as you desire". So, immediately Megha took a copper vessel and set out for the water.

166. Early in the morning, before sunrise, Megha took the empty copper vessel and without an umbrella or chappals, set out to get water from the Godavari.

167. The entire distance, for coming and going, was about eight *koss*. It did not even occur to him to think of the exertion and strenuous efforts he would have to make.

168. Megha was not at all worried about this. He set out on getting the permission. When there is a strong determination there is a great joy in performing the task.

169. When he thought of giving a bath to Sai with the Godavari water, he was not bothered about the strenuous efforts or the exhaustion. His firm faith was his support.

170. So be it. He brought the water and poured it into a wide-mouthed copper pot. He began to persuade Baba to get up for the bath, but he did not agree.

171. "The noon *arati* is over and the people have gone to their homes. All the preparations for the bath have been made and it is afternoon", said Megha.

172. Seeing Megha's great insistence, then Sai in sport and as if in a mock fight, took Megha's hand in his hands and said:

173. "I do not wish to bathe in the Godavari waters? How immature can you be! Why does a fakir like me want Ganga water? What is it to me?"

174. But Megha was not prepared to listen at all, since he believed that Baba was his Shankar. He only knew that Shankar is pleased with Ganges water.

175. He said: "Baba to-day is the festival of 'Makar Sankranti'. When Shankar is given bath with the waters of the Ganges, he is propitiated".

176. Then, considering his love and his adamant resolution, Baba said: "Fulfil your wish", as Megha was pure of heart.

177. After saying that he got up and sat down on the low stool made ready for the bath. He bent forward his head and said: "Pour just a little water.

178. "Out of all the limbs, the head is the most important. Pour a little water on it. It is as good as having a full bath. At least listen to that much".

179. Agreeing to do so, Megha picked up the pot. He was so overwhelmed with love while pouring it on the head that he emptied it completely while shouting "Har Ganga", and poured it on the whole body.

180. Megha was greatly joyful. "My Shankar has bathed with his clothes on", he said, as he put down the empty pot. When he looked, he was greatly surprised.

181. Though he had poured the water on the whole body, only the head was wet. All the other limbs were absolutely dry. There was not even a drop of water on the clothes.

182. Megha's pride was crushed. Those who were around were surprised. Sree Sai thus gratifies the fond fancies of his devotees.

183. 'You felt like giving me a bath. Go ahead and do it to satisfy your desire. While doing that also, you will easily come to know my inner powers', Baba seemed to say by this *leela*.

184. This is the principle of devotion to Sai. If only through good fortune you reach him, then nothing is impossible to achieve. Gradually, everything becomes easy.

185. Casually, while sitting, talking, going for walks in the morning and in the afternoon, if the devotee has faith and patience, he achieves whatever he desires.

186. But, any power or miraculous sign was shown in the course of normal routine. Gradually he created inherent interest and made them understand spiritual matters.

187. There is another story of Megha, which will please the listeners very much. Seeing Sai's love for his devotees, the listeners will be pleased.

188. A big picture of Baba, which Nana (Chandorkar) had newly given, was placed in the *Vada* by Megha and he worshipped it regularly.

189. The real image at the *Masjid* and the exact replica in the *Vada*, were worshipped with *arati*, at both the places, day and night.

190. When about twelve months had passed in doing this divine service, when Megha was awake early one morning, he saw a vision.

191. Megha was lying in bed and though he had his eyes closed, he was fully awake and he saw Baba distinctly.

192. Baba, too, was aware that he was awake. He then threw consecrated rice on the bed and said: "Megha, draw a trident", and then disappeared there and then.

193. Listening to these words of Baba, Megha opened his eyes with great enthusiasm. He was very surprised to find that Baba had disappeared.

194. Then Megha looked all around. There were grains of rice scattered everywhere on the bed. The doors of the *Vada* were closed, as earlier. Hence he was confused.

195. He went to the *Masjid* immediately. While taking Baba's *darshan*, Megha told him the story of the trident and asked permission to draw it.

196. Megha related the vision with all details. Baba said: "How can it be a vision? Did you not hear my words? I told you to draw the trident.

197. "Are you trying to test my words by calling it a vision? My words are always very profound and not a syllable is empty".

198. "I too felt this at first that you had woken me. But not a single door was open. That's why I felt differently", replied Megha.

199. Listen to Baba's answer: "I do not need a door to enter. I have no form or dimension. I am always everywhere.

200. "For the one who places his burdens on me and has become one with me, I manipulate all his actions like the actions of a marionette".

201. So be it. The subsequent marvellous narration about the purpose of the trident should be heard with great attention. The connection will become evident.

202. On one hand, Megha returned and began to draw the trident on the wall, near the picture in the *wada*. He outlined the trident in red colour.

203. The next day, a Ramdasi devotee from Pune came to the *Masjid*. He did obeisance to Baba with love and presented him with a *lingam*[7].

204. Just then Megha too arrived there, and did an eight-fold obeisance to Baba. Baba said: "Here Shankar has come! Now, you look after him".

205. Upon getting the *lingam* in this manner, immediately after the vision of the trident, Megha kept on gazing at the *lingam* overcome with emotion.

206. Kaka Saheb Dixit too had another marvellous experience of the *lingam*. Listen with reverence to everything. Your faith in Baba will become firmer.

207. While Megha set off from the *Masjid* with the *lingam*, Dixit was engrossed in chanting the Lord's name, after his bath in the *wada*.

208. Wiping his body with a clean, washed cloth, a towel covering his head, he stood on a stone concentrating on Sai.

209. He was chanting the Lord's name, as per his usual practice with his head covered. He then had a vision of the *lingam*.

210. Dixit thought: 'Why did I today get the *darshan* of the *lingam* when I was chanting the Lord's name?' There was Megha, in front of him, looking very gratified.

211. Megha said: "Look, Kaka! Look at the *lingam* that Baba has given". Kaka was surprised and pleased to see this particular *lingam*.

212. It was of the same shape, size and markings like the one that had appeared in his meditation, just a little earlier. Dixit was delighted.

213. Be it so. Later, after the drawing of the trident was complete, Sai got Megha to establish the lingam near the picture.

214. Since Megha liked to worship Shankar, by presenting him with the Shankar *lingam*, Sai strengthened his devotion. Such are the marvellous narrations about Sai[8]!

215. Is there only one such story! I can relate innumerable. But, this book would become extremely lengthy. Therefore, I ask the listeners' pardon.

216. Yet as you listeners are anxious, I will relate one more in the next chapter. You will see Sai's marvel, which is even more singular.

217. Hemad surrenders to Sai, and makes people listen to the *Saicharita*, by which the dangers of the mundane existence will be warded off and everybody's difficulties will be removed.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the twentyeighth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by the Saints and virtuous people, called "Narration of Visions".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

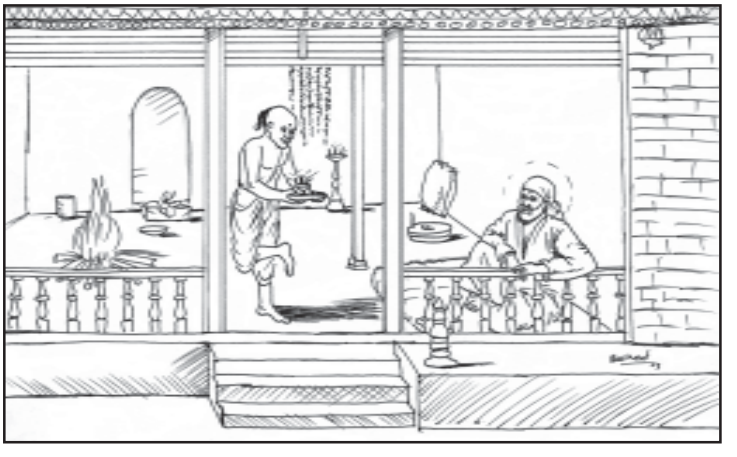
May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Actually, this story of Bhimaji Patil appears in Chapter 13. This is an error.
2. Suburb of Bombay.
3. There is a similar story. A Punjab Brahmin, named Ramlal, lived in Shirdi. When he was in Bombay, Maharaj appeared in his dream and said: "Come to me." He had never had Maharaj's *darshan* nor had he seen his photograph. Therefore, he was unable to recognise the Maharaj of his dream. The next day, while passing a shop by the road, he saw Maharaj's photograph. He asked the shopkeeper: "Whose picture is this and where does this Maharaj live?" The shopkeeper gave him all the detailed information. Thereafter, Ramlal

went to Shirdi and stayed there until Maharaj's death.

4. Godavari is also known as Gomati.
5. In Marathi, the phrase is: "to be between a well and a ravine".
6. Consort of Girija i.e. Shiva.
7. Emblematic representation of Shiva.
8. Similarly, Hari Sitaram Dixit has written down an incident related to the installation of Ganesh, of a dream that a lady had: "Once, when I was going to Shirdi, Moreshwar Pradhan came to meet me at Boribunder (station) and asked to inquire of Maharaja about the installation of Ganpati at his house at Santacruz. When I went to Shirdi, I asked Maharaj accordingly. Maharaj said yes and gave his permission. To inform Moreshwar Rao about it, I wrote a letter and posted it the same day, after asking Maharaj. That same night, rather early in the morning, Moreshwar's sister-in-law Tatibai saw a dream, at Santacruz, in which a very beautiful image of Ganapati was seated in a niche. She told about her dream, in the morning, to the household; and next day the letter about Maharaj's permission was received. In brief, Maharaj gave his advice in a dream, before the letter reached."



Megha performing the arati standing on one foot.

Till Megha was in Shirdi, he performed the noon *arati* regularly. But before that he worshipped all the village deities and then went to the *Masjid*. (Ch.28, ovi 156)

Trident

Upon getting the 'lingam' in this manner, immediately after the vision of the trident, Megha kept on gazing at the 'lingam' overcome with emotion. (Ch. 28, ovi 205)

29

Narration of Stories of Dreams

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. In this chapter, I will make you listen to Sree's marvellous and unimaginable skills, beyond which have been related in the previous chapter. The subject is the same.
2. Hearing about Baba's incredible *leelas*, in the year 1916, a *bhajan* party came to Shirdi for *darshan*.
3. It was a travelling group who heard of Baba's fame at Madras. While going on a pilgrimage to Kashi, they broke journey at Shirdi.
4. They heard that Sai Baba was a great saint, patient, generous and one who had controlled his passions. He was kind to pilgrims and distributed large sums of money.
5. He was munificent with small change; half and quarter rupees rained freely. He gave ten, twenty and fifty rupees to some.
6. This was not only on festive days, or for some special occasions. Everyday, he gave it happily, in the above mentioned proportions.
7. Showmen came, *nautanki* troupes danced, great singers gave programmes, bards performed, persons doing *tamasha* paid obeisance, *kirtankars* gave engrossing *bhajans*.
8. Having heard by word of mouth that Maharaj was generous, and liberal in giving charity, they desired to have *darshan*.
9. Sometimes, if Baba felt like it, he distributed money even to the travellers. He inquired after the well-being of the poor and the meek. Sainath was the embodiment of kindness.
10. There were four persons in the party – one man and three women. The man himself, his sister-in-law, wife and daughter. They were desirous of the saint's *darshan*.

11. After taking Sai's *darshan*, the party was pleased. They sang loving *bhajans*, before Sai, every day, regularly.
12. They belonged to the Ramdasi cult and sang *bhajans* with great joy. Baba, too, if he felt like it, gave them a rupee or half a rupee.
13. Sometimes Baba gave them *barfi* and sometimes he sent them back empty handed. This was his usual practice but there was nothing definite or predictable about it.
14. That he distributed money, that is true. There is no untruth in it. But he did not give to everybody. No one was aware of what was in his mind.
15. Fakirs and beggars came to beg alms always at Baba's door. Though Baba was very kind he did not give charity to all.
16. Only he whose time had come to have good fortune, he alone received the happiness of the money. Even a small coin, touched by the hands of a saint, is obtained only by the fortunate.
17. Let me tell you a story to illustrate this which will satisfy the listeners. After narrating it, I will proceed to the main one.
18. After breakfast when Baba sat down near the *dhuni* against the pillar, in the *Masjid*, a girl called Amani[1] used to come.
19. The young girl was three years old, naked, and always came at this time, with her mother carrying a little tin box[2] in her hands.
20. Amani would sit on his lap and give the little box in Baba's hands. Holding Baba's hands, she would repeat: "Baba, a rupee, a rupee".
21. Baba was very fond of children. The girl was plump and beautiful. He kissed and caressed her, and held her closely.
22. Baba would embrace her but Amani's mind was fixed on the money. "Baba, give, give me", she would say, concentrating on his pocket.
23. Amani was after all a child but the grown ups and the elders had the same greed, running only for selfish purposes. Rare was the person who had spiritual inclination.
24. The young girl sat on his lap, while her mother stayed a little beyond, outside the railing. She would signal to the girl not to move till he gave her the money.
25. "Am I a relative of your father or do I owe him anything that you pester me from the time you awake? Useless ones, wanting everything free!" Baba would say angrily.
26. But this anger was simulated, for love rose in waves in his heart. Putting his hands in his pocket, he would bring out a rupee.

27. After he put it in the box, and closed it with a sharp sound, as soon as the little box came into her hands, she would run off home.

28. This happened at breakfast time. Similarly, when he left for the Lendi he gave Amani a rupee, getting angry in the same way.

29. Thus, every day, he gave two rupees to her, six to Jamali[3], five to Dada Kelkar, and two each to Bhagya and Sundari.

30. Tatyaba was given between rupees ten to fiteen; Fakir Baba between rupees fifteen to fifty; eight rupees were distributed amongst the poor. This distribution was done daily.

31. Be it so. The Madrasis had heard stories of this generosity and as their selfish desire had arisen for the money, they started the practice of the *bhajans*.

32. The *bhajans* were beautiful to listen to but they were sung out of great greed. They stayed in Shirdi, the whole family, in the hope of getting money.

33. Out of the group, three of them had great greed and hoped that Baba would give a lot of money. But only the wife worshipped Baba with devotion. This was her own feeling while singing.

34. Her reverence was like that of the peacock dancing happily on seeing the rain-bearing clouds or that of the *chakor* for the moon.

35. One day when the noon *arati* was in progress, Sai the embodiment of kindness, seeing the lady's true state of devotion, gave her darshan as Ram.

36. For all others, he was the usual Sainath. He appeared to the lady as the consort of Janaki[4]. Tears began pouring from her eyes. People were surprised to see this.

37. She clapped with both her hands while the tears flowed from her eyes. Seeing this unusual sight at that time, the people were surprised.

38. Seeing this sight, all were curious to know why there was such a flood of intense love and joy only for her.

39. Later in the afternoon, brimming with great joy, she told her husband about the wonderful experience of Ram *darshan*, given by Sai.

40. "I saw Ram, he of the complexion of the blue lotus, the wish-fulfilling tree of the devotees, the elder brother of Bharat, the joy of Sita and the son of Dasharath.

41. "I saw Janaki Nath, adorned with a crown, wearing earrings, a garland of wild flowers, apparelled in yellow and with four hands.

42. Holding the conch, discus and mace, on his chest was the mark of Vishnu and he was adorned by the *koustubh*[5] garland. I saw that enchanting form of the divine *Purushottam*".

43. She said: "This unparalleled incarnation of Vishnu, who has taken a human form, the heart and soul of Janaki, the bewitching archer, I saw.

44. "He may appear as a fakir begging for alms from door to door but I saw the heart and soul of Janaki, the bewitching archer.

45. "He may seem to be an *Aulia*; or be seen by anyone else, in their hearts as someone different, but I saw the heart and soul of Janaki, the bewitching archer".

46. The lady was very devout; but her husband was very selfish. "Women are guileless, like this! How would *Raghupati* be here?!

47. "The innocent and devout see what is in their heart. We all saw Sai. How can she alone see Ram?"

48. He ridiculed his wife with several such remarks. But the lady did not have any ill feeling as she had not wrongly imagined anything.

49. It was popularly believed that she had earlier attained spirituality. She used to have Ram's *darshan*, often, when her mind was calm and composed.

50. Later, she became greedy for money. God does not co-exist with money. She was unable to have Ram *darshan*, for that is the nature of greed.

51. Sai was aware of all this. Knowing her tendency, he gave her Ram *darshan* again and fulfilled her desire.

52. Be it so. Later, that same night something strange happened. The man, while sleeping, had a frightful dream.

53. He found himself in some city, the prisoner of the police, who had tied his hands with ropes so tightly behind him that the very bones creaked.

54. There was a lock-up, near which Sai stood outside, quietly and unmovingly seeing the scene.

55. Seeing Maharaj near by, folding both his hands, he spoke in a humble and pitiable voice.

56. "Baba, having heard your fame I came to your feet. Why has this happened to me when you are present here?"

57. Maharaj replied: "One must suffer for one's deeds". The man said with great humility: "I have not done anything wrong.

58. "At least, not in this life, whereby I have to suffer this hardship". Whereupon Maharaj said: "Then it must have been in another life".

59. He thereupon replied: "What do I know about the previous life? And if at all there is anything, it should burn to ashes by your *darshan*, certainly.

60. "It should burn like a blade of grass in the fire at your *darshan*. Why then have I not been freed from it?"

61. Then Maharaj said to him: "Do you have so much faith?" When the man replied in the affirmative, he instructed him to close his eyes.

62. As he stood with his eyes closed, as instructed, at that moment he heard a thump, a sound as if someone had fallen down.

63. He was startled by this sudden sound. He opened his eyes and began to look around. He found himself free and the policeman lay on the ground, covered with blood.

64. He was very frightened by this. He began to look at Sainath, who laughed and said to him: "You are well caught now.

65. "Now an officer will come and after observing everything, will certainly declare you to be the culprit. He will arrest you again".

66. Then the person said sincerely : "Baba, what you say is true. Now, do something and have me released. No one else except you can protect me".

67. Hearing this Sai said: "Close your eyes again". After doing that, when he opened the eyes, he saw another strange sight.

68. He was outside the lock-up and Maharaj Sai was near him. He did an eight fold obeisance. Then Baba asked him:

69. "Think well and tell me whether there is any difference between your prostration that you have done now and the ones that you have been doing before this?"

70. Then, the man replied: "As different as the sky is from the earth! My earlier prostrations were done for monetary gains but this one is to acknowledge you as God.

71. Earlier I had no faith in you. Not only that, but I believed that as you were a Muslim, you were defiling the Hindus. That was why I had anger within me, against you".

72. Whereupon, Baba asked: "Do you not believe in any Muslim deity?" The man replied in the negative.

73. Baba further asked him: "Do you not have a *panja*[6] in your home? Do you not worship it during *Tabut*[7] ? Think carefully.

74. You also have Kada Bibi at home, whom you worship and propitiate at the time of weddings. She is a Muslim deity".

75. He admitted this. Then he was asked if he desired anything. The man wished to have *darshan* of his own Guru, Ramdas.

76. Maharaj then asked him to turn around and look. Then when he did so, he saw *Samartha* Ramdas standing before him.

77. But as soon as he bent down at his feet, *Samartha* disappeared. Then, as he looked curiously a strange thought came to his mind.

78. "Baba you are quite advanced in age and look like an old man. Have you any idea of the longevity of your life?"

79. "How do you say that I am old? See if you can race with me?" and saying these words, Sai began to run and the man ran behind him.

80. Maharaj raised a cloud of dust as he ran at full speed; and disappeared at that moment. The man then woke up.

81. So be it. After waking he thought over his dream, and found that his whole thinking had changed. He extolled the greatness of Baba.

82. Seeing such a marvel, his devotion at Sai's feet was firmly established. His earlier attitude changed and his doubts about Baba vanished.

83. Although the whole thing was a dream, but when the listeners hear those questions and answers, they will realise the profoundity therein.

84. By reflection on these questions and answers, the Madrasi learned a great lesson. His antagonism to Sai disappeared, amidst laughter and jokes.

85. Next day, early morning, when the group came to the *Masjid* for *darshan*, Sai Nath gave them *barfi* worth two rupees and showed his grace.

86. Also, Baba gave them all two rupees from his pocket and made them stay longer. They continued with their *bhajans* and worship.

87. Later, after some time, the group decided to leave. Though they had not received a lot of money, they received blessings in plenty:

88. "Allah Malik will give you in plenty! Allah will take care of your welfare!" When they set out on their travels, this is what proved most useful.

89. With Sai's blessings and with remembrance of Sai, in their minds and hearts during their travels, day or night, they had no discomfort of any kind, even in their dreams.

90. They went to numerous pilgrim places, as desired, thanks to the

blessings received. They had no problems on the way and they returned happily and comfortably to their home.

91. In addition to the places they had intended to go, they could visit many other pilgrim places. They praised the marvel of Sai's words and all were very happy.

92. In addition to the saint's blessings, the words "Allah will take care of your welfare" proved true in every way. Their wishes were fulfilled.

93. Thus, this Madrasi group, all of whom were desirous of pilgrimage, and believed in God, all of them became virtuous and full of good qualities. Sai freed them from the cycle of life and death.

94. I will tell you another story, as sweet and interesting as this one. If the listeners hear it with reverence and devotion, they would be surprised.

95. How infinitely kind was Sai and how he fulfilled the desires of his devotees with love, working unceasingly! He was the wish-fulfilling tree for the devotees!

96. In Bandra, Thane District, there was a staunch devotee named Raghunath Rao Tendulkar. He was brilliant, courageous and very knowledgeable.

97. He was always cheerful and loving. He was attached to the lotus feet of Sai, with the hope of obtaining the honey of knowledge. He continuously chanted the Lord's name.

98. He has described the *leelas* of Sai in a book called 'Bhajan Mala' (Garland of devotional songs). He who reads it with devotion and love, will be blessed by Sai at every step.

99. His wife was named Savitri and his eldest son was called Babu. See his strange experience. Listen to this story about Sai.

100. Once, Babu was confused. He had taken medical education for allopathy but he did not appear for the examination.

101. He worked very hard, day and night. He asked an astrologer, whether he would succeed in the examinations.

102. Scanning through the pages of the *panchang* [8], the astrologer studied the placing of the planets and after calculating the *rashi* [9] and *nakshatra* [10], with his fingers, looked anxious.

103. He said: "You have worked very hard, but this year the stars are not favourable. The next year is very auspicious. You will get through the examinations next year without any worries".

104. So what was the point of sitting for the examination, if the efforts were wasted! The student was apprehensive and mentally faltered.

105. Then, the student's mother visited Shirdi, after some time. She bowed at Sai's feet and began a conversation about general welfare.

106. Then this matter turned up and she beseeched Baba, in a humble voice and said that her son would have appeared for the examination, if the stars were favourable.

107. The astrologer had seen the horoscope and said that the time was not favourable. So, though he had studied well, the son had decided not to appear for the exam.

108. "Therefore, Baba, what is this aspect of the planets influencing his lot? Why such disappointment this year? Everyone is eager for him to finish with the examination".

109. After hearing her, Baba said: "Tell him to listen to me. Roll up the horoscope and sit for the examination, without any anxiety.

110. "Do not follow anyone else's advice. Do not look at the horoscope. Do not believe in astrology. Study with concentration.

111. "Tell your son that he will be successful. He should sit for the examination without anxiety. Let him not lose hope. Have full faith in me".

112. Be it so. The mother returned to her home with Baba's permission. She told the son of Baba's message and the mother assured him, with eagerness.

113. Such was the encouragement of Sai's words that the son sat for the examination and answered all the questions confidently.

114. The written examinations were finished. He had answered fully. Still, the lack of self-confidence overwhelmed him. Doubts wrecked his mind.

115. Though he had written answers which were adequate for him to pass, the student felt that they were not enough and he lost courage.

116. Actually, he had got through the written examination. Yet he felt that he had failed. Therefore, he was dejected and would not go for the oral examinations.

117. The oral examinations started. The first day passed by. The next day, a friend came and found that the student was having his meal.

118. He said: "How strange this is! The examiner is worried about you. He asked me to come and find out the reason for your absence yesterday".

119. Tendulkar frankly told him: "When I have failed in the written examination why should I take the trouble to appear for the orals. Therefore, I have stayed home through disappointment".

120. "The examiner, on the contrary, has told me to come and bring you somehow and give you the news that you have passed in the written examination".
121. Then, how can his joy be described! He invoked Sai Maharaj and without wasting a moment, ran out with enthusiasm.
122. Be it so. Everything turned out well. The desire to get through the examination was fulfilled. Sai also strengthened the devotion at his feet by fulfilling his wish.
123. The handle of the grinding stone often has to be moved about to fix it firmly. Similarly is the case with faith at the Guru's feet. Sai strengthens it by testing it.
124. He never said anything to anybody whereby the mind was not moved. This was the usual experience with Baba. He strengthened the faith in this manner.
125. As one goes along the directed path, in the beginning everything seems to go well. Later, thorny shrubs seem to be so spread out that one encounters thorns only, in all quarters.
126. Then one's faith is shaken and doubts easily arise. 'Why has Sai brought me to this difficult path?', one could ask.
127. When one feels like this, make a stronger effort to hold on to your faith. These difficulties are there to test you; then only will firm faith become part of you.
128. Facing these difficulties and constantly chanting Sai's name, all the problems will be removed. This is the tremendous power of the name.
129. That is the purpose of these difficulties, which are also created by Sai. It is only then that one remembers Sai and chants his name, which brings about the end of all the difficulties.
130. So be it. The father of this young man was a very loving devotee of Baba — patient, generous, and of a virtuous disposition. His body had become enfeebled.
131. He had worked in the firm of a foreign businessman, who had an establishment in Bombay, with sincerity and honesty.
132. Later, with advancing age, his vision began dimming and he was physically weakened. He desired complete rest.
133. As he had no strength to work, Raghunath Rao took leave to improve his health and took complete rest.
134. Even after that leave had fully expired, as he was not fully rested, he wrote a further application for extension of leave.

135. When his immediate superior saw the application, he recommended the leave. But the head of the office was very considerate and kind.

136. The head of the office was generous. Taking into consideration the sincere services of this worker, he put him on half pay to help the household.

137. This was the Government practice, which was followed by the topmost business houses, depending upon circumstances, in the case of their honest staff members, to encourage them.

138. "But will my employer continue to give me this pay when I am unable to work," Tendulkar worried.

139. "My whole pay is Rs. 150/-. When I get the pension of Rs. 75/-, how will I meet my family's expenses"! was the thought he brooded over.

140. But later, something delightful happened. See Baba's novel miracle. He asked Raghunath Rao's wife about their welfare. Hear this marvel.

141. Fifteen days before the final orders for the pension, Baba appeared in her dream and asked her opinion.

142. "I wish that he is given Rs.100/-. Will that satisfy you?" He asked. The lady replied: "Why do you ask? We have full faith in you".

143. There, a decision was taken on his application. Raghunath was a faithful employee who had served well and for several years, so he should be given a good pension.

144. Though Baba had said Rs.100/-, Rs.10/- were given additionally[11]. Such was *Samartha*, who was compassionate and with immense love for the devotees.

145. Now listen to one more story which is very interesting and entertaining, which will arouse love and delight amongst the devotees. The listeners will enjoy it.

146. This sweet story is about a doctor, named Captain Hate, who was a staunch devotee of Baba, to whom Baba gave *darshan* in a dream, early one morning.

147. Hate lived in Gwalior and saw Baba in his dream there. Notice the skillful way in which Baba asked questions and the replies that Hate gave.

148. Baba said: "Have you forgotten me?" Hate immediately held Baba's feet and said: "If the child forgets the mother, how will it be saved?"

149. In the dream, he got up quickly and went to the garden, picked fresh *valpapdi* [12], *shidha*[13] and with *dakshina* made an offering to prove his devotion.

150. When all these items were ready to prove his devotion, Hate moved

forward with the scuttle, in which they were placed, to make the offering. Suddenly his eyes opened and he realised that it was a dream.

151. Immediately, Hate felt that he must collect all the items seen in his dream and offer them to Baba personally, by going to Shirdi.

152. But, as he was in Gwalior, he wrote a letter to his friend[14], giving him all the details of the circumstances, and persuaded him to go to Shirdi himself.

153. "The money will be sent to you by post. Buy good quality *shidha* and somehow, obtain selected *valpapdi*.

154. Take the balance money with you and offer it to Baba, with *shidha* and other things. Pay obeisance at his feet and ask for *prasad*, and send it to me".

155. As soon as the money was received, the friend left for Shirdi. He purchased all the required items except for *papadi* for which there was difficulty. Just then a basket came there.

156. It was being carried on a woman's head. He called her and was surprised to find *valpapdi* in it. Everyone was surprised.

157. Then, he brought all the items and offered them with reverence to Maharaj. He gave them to Nimonkar to cook for *naivedya* the next day.

158. The next day when Baba sat down to eat, he did not touch the *dal* – rice etc. but he picked up only the *valpapdi*. Everyone was surprised.

159. He accepted only the *valpapdi* and ate only that. Hate was filled with joy when he got the news.

160. 'The experience that one has depends upon one's devotion'. Such was Hate's experience also. Listen to the marvel of the next story and know the sweet courtesy of Sai!

161. A desire arose in him to have a coin of a rupee, in his home, which had been touched and purified by Sai. Sai fulfilled his wish.

162. The mind is full of different feelings. Discarding the harmful only the beneficial ones should be adhered to. Then observe Sai's skill in helping the devotees.

163. When such a good desire arose in Hate it did not take any time to be satisfied. A friend of his, desirous of Sai *darshan*, was about to leave (for Shirdi).

164. Only the intention should be good, then Sai fulfils it marvellously. Those who have virtuous intentions, their well-being rests in Sai's hands.

165. Then Hate gave one rupee to his friend with great love and told him not to forget to place it in Baba's hands.

166. When the friend went to Shirdi, he immediately took Baba's *darshan*. He bowed down at his feet and placed his head there. Then he sat in front of Baba.

167. Baba extended his hand for *dakshina*, so he gave his dakshina at first. Baba put it in his pocket promptly. Then the friend took out Hate's money.

168. With folded hands, he put that rupee also on Baba's palm and said: "This *dakshina* has been sent with me by Dr. Hate".

169. This Sai is the dweller in all hearts. Even though Hate was in Gwalior, knowing the desire in his heart, he sat minutely looking at it.

170. Displaying affection, Baba held the coin before his eyes. He kept on singularly gazing at it. The people stared at him.

171. He tossed the coin up with his right thumb and caught it with his hands. He played with it in this way for some time. Then, he returned the rupee.

172. And said: "Return this to whom it belongs. Take this *udi prasad* along with it. Tell him that I do not want anything from him. Stay well".

173. Prostrating at Baba's feet and putting the udi *prasad* at the proper place, that friend took Baba's permission and returned to his home at Gwalior.

174. After reaching Gwalior and giving the rupee to the doctor, he related in detail all that had taken place. Hate was choked with emotion.

175. He said: "The purpose that I had in mind and as I had wished, Baba fulfilled my wish, knowing my desire".

176. This was what Hate felt but this was his interpretation. Who can understand the plans of the saints and their purpose?

177. Even if this (Hate's belief) is true then observe another incident. It is exactly the opposite of this. The Saints alone know their purpose.

178. He returned one person's rupee and pocketed the other's! Who can explain the reason with certainty and what was in Baba's mind?

179. He alone knows his reasons. We should only enjoy what is happening, and not miss the lovely opportunity to do so. Listen to the story, to this purpose.

180. Once, Vaman Narvekar who had immense love for Baba brought a beautiful coin to offer it with great devotion.

181. On one side the fascimile of Ram, Lakshman and Sita was engraved; and on the other, was a pleasing image of Hanuman with folded hands.

182. His intention in making the offering was to get it back after Baba had touched it, with *udi* and *prasad*.

183. Baba always knew the innermost wishes of others fully. Yet, when the coin was placed in his hands, he promptly put it in his pocket.

184. Madhavrao explained Vaman Rao's desire to Baba and earnestly entreated him to return the coin to him.

185. "Why should it be given to him? We should keep it ourselves", Baba replied in clear tones in front of Vaman Rao.

186. "However, if he is ready to pay twenty-five rupees, as its price, I will give it to him in exchange", Baba said to tell him so.

187. Then, to get back that coin, Vaman Rao quickly collected the required money, from here and there, and gave them to Baba.

188. That amount too he put in his pocket, as earlier, and said: "Even a heap of rupees cannot equal this one in value. Their value will be less than that of this coin".

189. Further, he said: "Shama, you take this. Let it be in our collection. Keep it in the shrine and keep worshipping it".

190. Now, why did he act like this? Who had the authority to ask him? Sai knows what is right and what is wrong. He is the mighty giver and receiver too.

191. So be it. Now that this story is completed, let us give a rest to the minds of the listeners so that they may contemplate and continuously dwell on the stories, which they have already heard.

192. Whatever is done or heard cannot be assimilated without contemplation and continuous study. Listening alone will be useless.

193. Therefore, Hemad surrenders to Sai. He holds his feet on his head, which is the best means for achieving anything. Further narration will come later.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the twentyninth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita* written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by the Saints and virtuous people, called "Narration of Stories of Dreams".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Daughter of Baba's devotee Kondaji.
2. Box was originally the container for 'jintan', which were small, flavourful pills eaten with betel leaf or otherwise.
3. Kondaji's wife and Amani's mother.
4. Sita, i.e. she saw him as Ram.
5. One of the fourteen precious things obtained from the ocean on churning it.
6. A hand, which symbolises the five great saints of the Muslims.
7. Bier, supposed to be the tombs of Hassan and Hussein, carried about in procession during Moharrum.
8. A calendar which deals with five things, such as the lunar date, the day of the week, planets' conjunction and half lunar day.
9. The sign of the zodiac.
10. Asterism in the moon's path.
11. Tendulkar retired on a pension of Rs. 110/-.
12. Wax beans.
13. Rice, dal, flour and ghee.
14. Extract from Captain Hate's letter dated Xmas written from Lashkar (Gwalior) addressed to Mr. H.S. Dixit:

    "Though I am miles away, the favour that Sai Baba, *Sadguru*, shows on me is marvellous. Duty keeps me here, but I will take the first opportunity of coming to Shirdi. My humble respects to Sai Baba. I have sent a M.O. of Rs. 12 only. Please give Rs.10/- as *dakshina* and Rs. 2/- should be spent in buying ghee, wheat flour, dal, etc. as *shidha*. Please do keep on it vegetable of *'valpapdi shenga*'. All this *shidha* etc. has a special meaning and I shall be highly obliged to you for this favour of yours."

30

Narration of Vows and Other Stories

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Aum. I bow down to Sai, the Compassionate One, who loves his devotees, the Abode of Mercy! Your *darshan* releases the devotees from the fear of this world by removing their difficulties.
2. Initially, you were without form and attributes but on account of the devotion of the devotees, you have been studded with attributes and incarnated as the crest jewel of saints, O' Sainath.
3. To give liberation to the devotees is always the mission of the saints; but you are the Guru of all the Saints. That mission is inevitable for you, therefore.
4. Those that have taken refuge at your feet have all their sins destroyed. The good *karmas* emerge to the surface to clear the path and make it free of fear and difficulties.
5. Remembering your feet, Brahmins come from well known *tirthas* and recite the *Gayatri Mantra*, and read religious books.
6. We, who are weak and without any merits, what do we know of devotion? Though others may leave us, Sai won't forsake us.
7. Those who receive his grace become inconceivably powerful, for they receive the treasure of self bliss and discrimination together with knowledge.
8. Eagerness to hear the words from Sai's lips made the devotees delirious. Each word became stamped upon their minds and they realised the truth contained in them.
9. Sainath fully knows the desires of his devotees. He alone is capable of fulfilling them, which is why his devotees are grateful.
10. 'O' Sainatha! I invoke your help and place my head at your feet. Forgetting all my faults, free this servant of yours from all anxieties.'

11. If a devotee, overcome by calamities, prays to Sainath thus, his mind will be calmed as he alone is the giver of peace.
12. This Sai, the Ocean of Mercy, favoured me. The result of it is this auspicious book presented with respect to all readers.
13. Otherwise, what qualification had I to undertake such an immense task? As he took all the responsibility, I felt no burden.
14. With Sai *Samartha*, the Light of Knowledge, to illumine my words and to destroy the darkness of ignorance, why should I have any doubts?
15. My faith in that Lord, the Cloud of Mercy, did not make me feel that I was at all labouring. By his grace, I was enabled to achieve my desired objective.
16. This service to the saint, in the form of the book, was on account of my good deeds in the past births, which you have received well, O' Lord! I am grateful to fate for this and feel blessed.
17. In the last chapter, you heard how Sai, the Cloud of Mercy, gave different kinds of dream visions to teach his devotees.
18. In the present chapter, listen to an interesting story of a devotee of 'Sapta Shringi' Goddess, which is enjoyable.
19. It is also a miracle how Gods and Goddesses entrust their devotees into the hands of saints. Listen with rapt attention.
20. There are many stories about Maharaj, each more wonderful than the other. This story is also worth listening to. Pay attention and listen.
21. It is not a story but a drink of pure nectar. You will be gratified by it. You will realise the greatness of Sai, as well as his all pervasiveness.
22. Critics and logicians should not pursue this. There is no scope here for arguments. What is necessary is unlimited love.
23. Not only should the person be learned but he should be devout, full of faith, a believer or in attendance upon a saint. Others will take them to be fables.
24. The wish-fulfilling tree of Sai *leelas* undoubtedly bears fruits and flowers. One who is a fortunate devotee, he alone can reach out and pluck them.
25. Listen then, to this very purifying story which is giver of salvation to the seekers, the best amongst all the means; and beneficial to all.
26. Such is the nectar - like drink of Sai stories which easily helps in uplifting all creatures, including the ignorant. The worldly people

will be satisfied and it is a means for those desirous of attaining liberation.

27. When I think of one, many more stories come to my mind. Therefore, Hemad humbly invites the listeners to hear them.

28. Thus, narrating one story after another will increase your enjoyment of the sweet *leelas*. Those who are afflicted by the problems of the world will get relief. This is itself Sai's greatness.

29. In the village Vani, of Nasik District, there lived a man called Kakaji Vaidya, who was the *pujari* of the Devi's temple there.

30. The Devi was known as 'Sapta Shringi'. The *pujari* was in a disturbed state of mind due to insurmountable difficulties and was harassed by the worldly life.

31. When the cycle of time takes a bad turn, the mind spins in turmoil like a top and the body runs helter-skelter. There is no peace at all.

32. In this manner, Kakaji was very miserable. So he went to the temple and prayed fervently to the Goddess, to relieve him of his anxieties.

33. He prayed whole heartedly, whereby the Devi was moved by his feelings. That same night, he got a vision. Listeners should hear about its miraculous nature.

34. The Devi, Mother 'Sapta Shringi', appeared in Kakaji's dream and said: "You go to Baba. Your mind will be at peace".

35. He hoped that the Devi would clarify who and where this Baba was. Kaka was in this eager state of mind, when his eyes opened.

36. The questions in his mind remained unanswered as the vision immediately ended. Kakaji tried to guess the identity of the 'Baba', of whom she spoke.

37. Kakaji decided that it must be 'Baba' Tryambakeshwar certainly. So he immediately left and took *darshan*. But his mind remained disturbed.

38. Kakaji stayed in Tryambakeshwar for ten days but till the end he remained downcast and depressed.

39. The dejection did not leave him. His mind remained wavering. Day by day, his agitation increased. So, Kakaji started on his return journey.

40. When he was there, he bathed early in the morning, chanted the *Rudra* hymns, did the *Abhishekam* pouring fresh cold water unceasingly over the Pinda (*Shiva Linga*). But he was as restless as before.

41. Going again to the Devi's temple, he said: "Why did you send me

to Tryambakeshwar? At least now, give me peace of mind. Enough of this fruitless running around".

42. In this manner, he implored the Devi and prayed to her. The Devi gave him *darshan* at night and told him in his dream:

43. "The 'Baba' I spoke of is Shirdi's Sai *Samartha*. I do not understand why you went to Tryambakeshwar unnecessarily".

44. 'Where is Shirdi and how do I go there? I do not know this Baba. Now how can this trip be undertaken? I am at a loss as to how all this will happen', he thought.

45. But he, who is devoutedly attached to a saint's feet and who has the purpose of *darshan* in his mind, then the saint and even God fulfils his desire.

46. The saint and God are one. There is absolutely no difference between them. To believe per chance, that they are two, is duality. Saints are one with God.

47. If anybody thinks that he will go and see a saint and fulfil his desire, it will be a mere boast. The saints' ways are incomprehensible.

48. Unless the Saints will it, who can go and take their *darshan*? Even the leaf of a tree cannot move without their bidding.

49. The more anxious a devotee is for the *darshan*, the more devout and faithful he is, the greater is the experience of heavenly bliss attained by the best of devotees.

50. While Kakaji worried about how he would go for Sai *darshan*, a guest arrived from Shirdi searching for his whereabouts.

51. And was the guest some ordinary person? He was liked by Baba better than the others. None was comparable to him in Baba's love; and he was fortunate enough to deserve it.

52. He was called Madhavrao and held the hereditary office of Deshpande. Baba spoilt him and nobody could get around Baba as he could.

53. They always indulged in loving disputes and addressed each other in familiar terms. Baba loved him exceptionally, like his own son. He came at that time to Vani.

54. Once when he was a child and fell ill, his mother prayed to the Devi and said: "I leave this child to your mercy to save or kill.

55. "But should he recover, I will bring him for your *darshan*". The child recovered after the Devi had been invoked.

56. Whether it be a doctor or a deity, after the problem is over, they are

forgotten. In adversity one remembers to make an invocation and a vow; which when unfulfilled, becomes a reason for fear.

57. Several years passed and the vow was completely forgotten. The mother recalled it in her last moments and requested Madhavrao.

58. "This vow was taken a long time ago. It has not been fulfilled till this time. It is not good to have such a long delay. Go for the *Devi's darshan*".

59. Also, when the mother had ring-worm on her breasts, and had unbearable pain, she had taken another vow to the Devi.

60. "Mother, I will come rolling in prostration to you, if you relieve me from this misery. I shall offer you a replica of two silver breasts".

61. That vow had remained unfulfilled too, being postponed from time to time. She remembered both of them, at the approach of her death.

62. She recalled to Babya[1] about this matter and took a promise from him that he would fulfil them. The mother then becoming desireless merged eternally at the Lord's feet.

63. Later on, Madhavrao kept on procrastinating and years rolled by. He forgot all about it also and the vows remained unfulfilled.

64. In this manner, after thirty years, see what happened in Shirdi. An astrologer came there, while travelling.

65. He had a deep understanding of astrology, and was able to read the past, the future and the present. He satisfied the curiosity of many, was highly praised and continued to stay there for a while.

66. He pleased Shrimant Keshavraoji Butti[2] and others, with his predictions, and gratified everyone in no time.

67. When Bapaji, the younger brother of Madhavrao, asked about his future, the astrologer told him that the Goddess was displeased with him.

68. He said: "Your mother had taken vows which she had asked your elder brother to fulfil at the time of her death.

69. "Not having fulfilled them till now, the Goddess is greatly troubling you". Bapaji told everything to Madhavrao, when he came home.

70. Madhavrao realised his mistake. He called a goldsmith and had a replica made of two silver breasts and took them to the *Masjid*.

71. After prostrating at the feet of Baba, he placed the breasts before him, and said to him: "Please accept these and free me from that vow.

72. "You are our 'Sapta Shringi'. You are our Goddess. Please accept this as promised and be satisfied".

73. Baba replied: "Go to the temple of 'Sapta Shringi' and offer to her what was promised to her by your own hands, placing these ornamental breasts at her feet".

74. When Baba insisted thus, Madhavrao also felt the same way. He left the house determined to take *darshan*.

75. He took Baba's *darshan* and requested for his blessings. Taking *udi* and *prasad*, he took permission and left.

76. He came to the temple of 'Sapta Shringi' and began to search for the family priest. Luckily he was taken to Kakaji's house and met him without any efforts.

77. Kakaji was desiring to meet Baba as soon as possible, and just then he met Madhavrao. Was this an ordinary coincidence!?

78. When making preliminary inquiries about the whereabouts of Madhavrao, when he learnt that he had come from Shirdi, his joy knew no bounds and they embraced one another.

79. They were both pleased, at the turn of events and praised Sai's *leelas*. After the ritual for the vows was completed, the priest left for Shirdi.

80. The priest was filled with joy to have the companionship of a person like Madhavrao, which he got unexpectedly. He thought only of his trip to Shirdi.

81. As soon as the vows were fulfilled, they both arrived quickly at Shirdi. No sooner than they had arrived, they left for Sai's *darshan*, with lots of love and eagerness.

82. The intensity of emotion increases the pace of a traveller. Kakaji arrived at the banks of the Godavari, from where Shirdi was close by[3].

83. The priest bowed at Baba's feet and washed them with his tears. Being filled with happiness at the *darshan*, he was at peace.

84. This was the purpose of the vision of the Goddess. When he saw Baba *Samartha* with his own eyes, Kakaji was truly happy and his wish was fulfilled.

85. So be it. Kakaji was filled with joy. After the *darshan,* his mind was at peace. He really became free of all worries, as the Cloud of Mercy had rained.

86. The fickleness of his mind disappeared. He was himself surprised. He wondered how strange this was!

87. Baba had not said a word. Nor had he asked any questions leading to this satisfaction. Nor had he given any blessings. The mere *darshan* had brought about contentment.

88. 'My fickle mindedness has subsided by mere *darshan*. I have attained incredible happiness and perfect understanding. This is called the greatness of *darshan*!'

89. His eyes were rivetted to Sai's feet and he could not utter a word. Listening to Baba's stories, his happiness could not be contained.

90. The priest surrendered to the *Samaratha* with his full faith and attained his happiness. He forgot his earlier problems.

91. Kakaji stayed for twelve days at Shirdi. His mind settled and then he returned to 'Sapta Shringi'.

92. The time when one sees a dream has relevance. It is believed that only dreams that are seen at dawn or early morning come true. Others are ineffectual.

93. This is well-known. But the dreams regarding Shirdi, wherever they occurred or at whatever time, were fulfilled. This was the invariable experience of the devotees.

94. I will present a short story illustrating this statement to the listeners. They will find it a great marvel and will give them increased enjoyment in listening.

95. One afternoon Baba told Dixit: "Take a *tonga*, go to Rahata and bring Kushal Bhau[4] along with you.

96. "Tell him that it has been a long time since I met him, so I have a desire to see him. Tell him that Baba is calling you to meet him".

97. Respectfully obeying the orders, Dixit took the *tonga* and went. Kushal Bhau met him immediately and Dixit told him the purpose of his visit.

98. Hearing Baba's message, Kushal Bhau was greatly surprised. He said: "I have just woken up from a nap and in my sleep I got the same orders.

99. "Just now, I had laid down to rest after lunch. No sooner than my eyes closed that Baba said the same thing to me in my sleep.

100. "He said: 'Come to Shirdi right now.' I also had a strong desire, but what could I do? There were no horses. I sent my son to inform Baba about it.

101. "The boy must have hardly gone beyond the village border and now here is your *tonga*!" Dixit jokingly said: "That is why I was instructed to come.

102. "So, if you like to come, the tonga is ready and waiting." Then, he left for Shirdi with Dixit very happily.
103. The result was that Kushal Bhau met Baba and Baba's wish was fulfilled. Kushal Bhau was also deeply moved by this *leela* of Baba.
104. Once, Baba appeared in a dream of a Punjabi Brahmin, whose name was Ramlal and who was a resident of Bombay.
105. The sky, the wind, the sun, the rain and other deities – due to the power of their grace, whatever knowledge one has of outward and inward objects, that is known as the waking state.
106. When all the senses are at rest, arises the awakening of the subliminal impressions of the waking condition. This takes the form of cognition and the person who cognises. This is the indication of the dream state.
107. His dream was strange. He did not know Baba's form or attributes. He had never had *darshan* earlier. "Come to me", he said.
108. From his appearance, the person looked like a great saint, but who was he and from where? When Ramlal awoke he was deep in thoughts.
109. He felt like going, but he did not have an address or his whereabouts. But he who calls for *darshan*, he alone knows to make the arrangements.
110. Then, that same afternoon as he was casually walking along the road, he saw a picture in a shop which startled him.
111. The form that he saw in his dream was exactly the same as this, felt Ramlal. He immediately made inquiries of the shopkeeper.
112. He closely looked at the picture. "Who is he and from where?" He learnt that it was Sai from Shirdi. Ramlal was satisfied.
113. Later, he came to know the full details. Ramlal went to Shirdi and stayed near Baba, till his *Mahasamadhi*.
114. This was Baba's wish – to fulfil the desires of his devotees, by bringing them for *darshan* and letting them achieve their worldly or spiritual objectives.
115. As it is, all his devotees were fulfilled. He himself was desireless, unselfish, without ego, and without any attachment. His *avatar* was only to fulfil the desires of the devotees.
116. Know him to be a true saint – who is untouched by anger, and has no place for hatred, nor does he have even a glance for the selfish;
117. whose selfless love for all is his mission and who does not waste even a word on matters other than righteousness.

118. In conclusion, Baba has got his life story written by holding my hand so that the devotees remain continuously engrossed in remembering him. This is its purpose.

119. Therefore Hemad very humbly always requests the listeners, to hear the Sai Satcharita with faith and devotion.

120. You will attain peace thereby and it will help in getting rid of evil habits. Devotion at Sai's feet will be strengthened and it will give salvation.

121. So be it. In the next chapter will be narrated the story of *Sanyasi* Vijayananda, who instead of going to Mansarovar attained liberation at Sai's feet.

122. Also, the devotee Mankar Balaram got his eternal rest; and Noolkar and Megha's desires were fulfilled completely by Sainath.

123. Even a creature, as cruel as a tiger, was also given a place at his feet. Such were the incredible deeds of Sai. Listening to them is like celebrating a great festival.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the thirtieth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by the Saints and virtuous people, called "Narration of Vows and Other Stories".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Madhavrao was called Babya by his mother,
2. The son of Bapusaheb Butti of Nagpur.
3. Ovi 82 should have preceded ovi 81.
4. A wealthy man of Rahata who was Baba's devotee.

Khushalchand of Rahata

31

The Greatness of Darshan

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. In the last chapter, the stories of the devotee of *Sapta Shringi* and how Sai got Madhavrao's vow fulfilled were narrated;
2. also, how *darshan* was given in dreams to Khushal Sheth and Ramlal; and how Ramlal was kept in Shirdi till Baba's *Mahasamadhi*.
3. The present story is more unique than those. Listeners may hear it with great respect – how one *sanyasi* on his way to Mansarovar attained liberation;
4. also, how Mankar, Noolkar, and Megha's objectives were fulfilled. These were men, but even a cruel tiger was given a place at Baba's feet.
5. These stories are very elaborate but the book will be greatly lengthened, therefore, I will narrate briefly by giving their essence, which will be beneficial to the seekers.
6. A person is re-born according to his thoughts at the time of death. Insects, on account of fear, become bees; while King Jadabharat was born as a deer on account of the deer that he had reared and about whose welfare he remained concerned in his last moments.
7. A person is re-born in the form, which he is contemplating at the time of death. The one who is humble at the feet of God is not re-born.
8. This is the reason for advocating the practice of constant chanting of the Lord's name, so that one is not bewildered at the time of death and one practises it at that time also.
9. All the *sadhanas* of a life time would be wasted if one is not alert at the crucial moment and the good company of Saints kept during the life would prove futile.

10. Therefore, those devotees who are full of devotion entrust their lives in the hands of Saints, because they alone know whether there is re-birth or not. They are the only companions at the end.
11. The story, illustrating this point, happened in the presence of Sai. The listeners will realise Sai's love for the devotees.
12. How distant was Madras from Shirdi, and Shirdi from the steep ascent of Mansarovar! But when the time was ripe, he brought the devotees to his feet.
13. Once, a Madrasi *Sanyasi* named Vijayanand left Madras for Mansarover with great enthusiasm.
14. He had seen a Japanese traveller's map of Mansarovar and that gave him a great desire to have *darshan*.
15. Shirdi was on the way and he had heard about Baba's fame. With a desire for *darshan*, he came searching for him.
16. Hearing that Sai Maharaj was a great Saint, renowned and known the world over, he desired to have *darshan*, so he stopped over enroute.
17. Swami Somadevji of Hardwar was also there at Shirdi, at that time. Both of them, naturally met at the gathering of the devotees.
18. The *Sanyasi* asked him how far Mansarovar was. The Swami told him it was five hundred miles and the route lay above Gangotri.
19. "It snows heavily there. The dialect changes every fifty *koss*. The Bhutanese are very suspicious and the travellers are greatly harassed".
20. Hearing this information given by the Swami the *Sanyasi* was distressed. He was in two minds and felt very worried.
21. He took Sai Baba's *darshan* and prostrated at his feet. He felt highly pleased. He sat cross-legged in front of Baba.
22. Then, Baba became furious and said to those present: "Drive away the *Sanyasi*. His company is not worthwhile".
23. To begin with, the *Sanyasi* was a newcomer and did not know Baba's nature. Though he felt ashamed, he sat there observing what was going on in the way of service.
24. It was the morning *durbar* time and there were a lot of people assembled in the *Masjid*. He was benumbed by watching the devotees performing the *puja* with the appropriate rituals.
25. Some washed Baba's feet and collected the *tirth* from his toes in a small ladle. They drank it with pure devotion and others touched it reverently to their eyes.
26. Some applied sandalwood paste to him and some smeared his body

with fragrant *attars* (scents). They all forgot the distinction of their castes and whether they were Brahmins or Sudras.

27. Though Baba was enraged with him, the *Sanyasi* felt overflowing affection. He did not feel like leaving and he did not get up, from where he was seated.

28. He stayed in Shirdi for two days. In the meanwhile, he got a letter informing him that his mother was ill at home. He was saddened by that.

29. He felt like going back home to be with his mother. But without Baba's permission, he could not take a step.

30. Then, taking the letter in his hand the *Sanyasi* went to the *Masjid*. He began to plead with Baba and to relate his mother's condition:

31. "Maharaj, Sai *Samartha*, I am longing to meet my mother. Give me your permission happily and bless me for my journey".

32. He fell at Baba's feet and continued: "Won't you grant me your permission, as a favour? My mother is holding on to life and is about to die, being bed-ridden.

33. "She must be waiting for me. So permit me to have a last look at her. It will enable her to bear her pains and have a peaceful end".

34. Sai *Samartha* was omniscient and knowing that the *sanyasi*'s own death was near, hear what he said to him, with attention:

35. "If you were so fond of your mother, then why did you don this garb (of a Sanyasi)? Attachment does not befit these clothes. You have blemished this ochre garb.

36. "Go and sit and do not feel disheartened. Let a few days pass. Then, we will think further. Do not lose patience and courage.

37. "There are many thieves in the *wada*. Bolt all the doors and be vigilant. They will rob you of all your possessions and attack you ferociously.

38. "Wealth is not permanent and the body, that is always transient. Knowing that death is always present, behave according to the *Shastras* and remain awake to your *dharma*.

39. "In this world if one has pride about body, wife, children etc., it leads to three-fold calamities. This is misery on account of wordly existence.

40. "The second calamity relates to the desire for the realm of heaven. Those who desire the other world, for them that also is a hindrance to attain self-realisation. They are always dejected.

41. "There (that is, in the other world) is no accumulation of merits so

there is no fearlessness. There is a fear of a fall when the store of good deeds comes to an end.

42. "Therefore, enjoyment of both, this world and the next, is disastrous. Complete renunciation of both is needed to derive eternal bliss.

43. "Those who are fed up with the worldly existence and have surrendered at the feet of the Lord, the knots of their attachment are loosened and the hold of ignorance is removed.

44. "When one is unfailingly involved in singing the Lord's name, the sins, sufferings and poverty disappear. The Lord runs and helps him who meditates on him with love and affection.

45. "Your store of past merits is considerable, so you have come here. Now attend to what I say and realise the greater purpose of life.

46. "From tomorrow start reading the 'Bhagvat', truly. Do three readings during three consecutive weeks, conscientiously.

47. "Being desireless, hear that book or read it with concentration, and contemplate on it night and day.

48. "The Lord will be pleased and bring to an end all your sorrows. Illusions and attachments will disappear and you will attain great happiness.

49. "After performing your ablutions, concentrating on the Lord, complete this vow that I have told you and you will be free from attachments".

50. When his own end was nearing, Baba had arranged the reading of 'Ram Vijay', which pleases the Lord of Death.

51. The next day in the morning, after completing the ablutions and his bath, he offered Baba a handful of flowers and took the dust of his feet on his head.

52. Carrying the 'Bhagvat' under his arm he looked for a quiet place to read and found Lendi Baug, peaceful and most suitable.

53. He sat cross-legged and started the reading. Being a *Sanyasi*, love of God was in his nature and he completed two readings in two weeks.

54. When he started the third reading he suddenly felt uneasy. He felt a weakness which increased. So he left that unfinished.

55. He returned to the *wada* and was very ill for two days. When the third day dawned, Buva did not open his eyes.

56. And placing his head on Fakir Baba's lap, the *Sanyasi* breathed his last. He was released from the body.

57. When Baba was informed about the *Sanyasi*'s death, he instructed to keep the body for a day.

58. "Do not bury him immediately", said Baba. So the people hoped that he would return to life and protected the body.
59. Does life come again once a person is dead? But, in obedience to Baba's words, the body was taken care of.
60. Ultimately, the words proved correct. The unclaimed body was taken care of. The doubts of the police were removed (when they made an inquiry). But, there was no question of his coming to life again.
61. Did Baba not know that the dead body would not regain life! The only purpose was that there should be an inquiry before burying the body.
62. Since the government is responsible for the disposal of an unclaimed corpse, a sudden death is always investigated. Therefore, Baba had instructed not to bury the body before hand.
63. So be it. Later, everything happened. The last rites were performed over the body and it was buried at a proper place. The saint's work was completed. (That is, of giving liberation to the *Sanyasi*.)
64. Here is another similar story, which I am going to narrate to the listeners. Listen to it with respectful attention, for a while. You will realise Sai's pervasiveness.
65. A householder, named Balaram Mankar, was a great devotee of Baba.
66. But, later, his wife died and there was an interruption in the performance of his duties as a householder. He lost peace of mind but he progressed towards the highest bliss.
67. Because of the accumulation of good deeds in the previous births, he got attached to Sai's feet. He developed unfailing faith there and was completely detached from his worldly ties.
68. Breaking all his ties with hopes, desires, children and family, Mankar due to his uncommon fate, left the worldly existence.
69. The main obstacle in entering the gate of spirituality is the desire to earn a livelihood and care for others. He placed this burden on his son and locked himself away from worldly concerns. (And went to Shirdi.)
70. This too is a kind of *Sanyas*, of which there are many varieties. But that which is not born of knowledge, and thus impressed in the mind, leads to difficulties at every step.
71. Therefore, this Sai, Generosity Incarnate, considering Mankar's singular devotion felt like gracing him and ensured that his detachment was strengthened.
72. The overlay of impressions of an infinite number of births do not

allow the fickle mind to become steady. The waves of fond dreams are powerful and detachment is not firmly rooted.

73. "Shirdi alone is not my abode. I am beyond the limits of time and space". To prove this Baba ordered Mankar thus:

74. "You have stayed in Shirdi long enough. Take these twelve rupees, in cash, for expenses. Go to Macchindar Gad for penance. Stay there determined to achieve happiness".

75. Hearing these words of Sai and deciding to obey his orders, he bowed his head. Making an eight-fold prostration, he paid obeisance at his feet.

76. But with great humility Balaram said to Sai: "What should I do in a place where I cannot have your *darshan*?

77. "Here I have the *darshan* of your feet daily, and obtain the *tirth* of the washings of your feet and can meditate on you day and night, without any effort. I shall be a destitute there.

78. "Therefore, without you Baba, how can I achieve my welfare there? I am incapable of understanding your idea in sending me to that place".

79. But knowing that a devotee should never doubt, not even for a fraction of a second, his Guru*'s* words, he felt immediate remorse and Mankar's doubts vanished.

80. He said: "Baba forgive me. My thoughts were base. I am ashamed that I had doubts. Doubts do not befit me.

81. "Ever under your command, absorbed in chanting the Lord's name, I will stay at the Gad only with protection of your power.

82. "There also I will meditate upon you, I will remember your merciful image, I will think only of your feet. This will always be my penance.

83. "I am totally surrendered to you. I have entrusted all my movements into your hands. Then why should I get this thought in my mind?

84. "Because of the power of your command, I will get peace there also. When I know your capability, why should I unnecessarily worry?"

85. Sai *Samartha* is *Brahman* Eternal. His words are as unalterable as those written by Brahma. Whosoever believes in them, will experience this.

86. Then Baba said to him: "Be attentive and listen to my words. Do not labour under any doubts.

87. "Go to Macchindar Gad immediately. Practise meditation thrice daily. After some passage of time, you will have heavenly bliss".

88. Hearing this assurance, Mankar remained silent. "What shall I say, who is the humble one?" He prepared for his departure to the Gad.

89. Once again, bowing down at Sai's feet and receiving *udi* and blessings, Mankar then left for Macchindar Gad with a calm mind.

90. Arriving at that pleasant place, where there was pure, clean water and cool breezes, he felt contented.

91. So this Mankar, as directed by Sai, remained at the Gad without Sai. He practised meditation as was told and advised.

92. Then, see Baba's marvel! When Mankar was deep in meditation he was given *darshan* in person at the Gad, and he had an experience.

93. There is nothing surprising in having *darshan* in the *Samadhi* state of meditation. But this happened when he was still seated and about to get up from the meditation. He saw *Sree Samartha*.

94. Not only did he see him, but Balakram asked him in person: "Baba why did you send me here?" Hear what reply he gave.

95. "While you were in Shirdi, you had many ideas and many waves of thoughts arose. Therefore, for quietening your fickle mind, I sent you to the Gad.

96. "You thought that I was in Shirdi, with a body composed of the five elements and three and a half cubits in length, and not outside it.

97. "Now you see and determine for yourself whether the person you see here is the same as you saw in Shirdi. It is for this reason that I sent you here".

98. So be it. Then, this Mankar after the completion of the specified time was over, left Macchindar Gad to go to his home.

99. He felt like going to Baule, where he lived. So he decided to travel by train from Pune to Dadar.

100. He went to Pune station. When the time came for buying the ticket and he was at the ticket-window, then a miracle happened.

101. An unknown traveller with a loin cloth round his waist and a rough blanket on his shoulder, with the appearance of being a rustic, was seen near the ticket–window.

102. This rustic had just bought a ticket for Dadar, when turning from the window, his eyes encountered those of Mankar's. So he approached him.

103. He asked: "Where are you going?" and when told "Dadar", he gave the ticket immediately saying: "You take it".

104. "I too was going to Dadar but I have remembered some important work for which I have to stay here. Hence I cannot leave".

105. Tickets were not easily available even after payment. When it was offered without making any effort, Mankar was very pleased.
106. Then, when he took out the money from his pocket to pay the fare, the rustic had pushed into the crowd and it could not be discovered where he had disappeared.
107. Balakram made all efforts to find the rustic but they were all in vain. By that time the train came.
108. 'Who was this rustic, bare footed and bare bodied, carrying just a rough blanket and wearing a tattered cloth round his head?
109. 'The money for the fare was not a small amount either and he paid for it in cash from his own pocket! Why has he put me under this obligation? I am unable to understand it!
110. 'He was generous and selfless. Who can this be appearing as a rustic?' This event ultimately remained a mystery. Mankar was disturbed.
111. With all these questions working in his mind, he kept on standing near the door of the compartment till the train moved, in the hope of sighting him.
112. But as the train started to move and he lost all hope of meeting him, he caught the handle of the door and jumped into the train.
113. Meeting Baba personally at the Gad, and now this was another strange incident! Recalling the rustic's peculiar apparel, Mankar felt restless.
114. So be it. Later this faithful devotee returned to Shirdi for his welfare at Sai's feet with singular attachment, firm faith and devotion.
115. The devotee Balakramji stayed in Shirdi, buzzing around the dust particles at the lotus feet of Sai, constantly humming the name of Sai.
116. With Baba's permission and in the company of Muktaramji, sometimes he left Shirdi and travelled elsewhere.
117. But Shirdi was the main place to which he returned time and again. At last he died on the sacred soil of Shirdi.
118. What a store of merits must be his, when a man leaves his mortal coil in the presence of Sai and with his mind concentrated on his feet! For him, death is without fear.
119. Blessed was Tatya Noolkar! And blessed was the great devotee Megha! who ultimately breathed their last in Shirdi, while worshipping Sai.
120. When Megha died, see the importance given by Baba for his cremation, and Baba's affection towards the devotee. Megha was already gratified.
121. Accompanied by all the devotees, the villagers went in procession

to the cremation ground. Baba also went to the cremation ground, showering flowers on Megha.

122. After Megha's last rites Baba's eyes also filled with tears. Like an ordinary being, with all attachments, he was full of grief.

123. With love, Baba covered the body, with his own hands, with plentiful flowers. After lamenting the death with pitiful tones, he returned.

124. Many Saints have been observed to grant salvation to human beings, but how can one adequately describe Sai Baba's greatness in this respect!

125. Can a fierce animal like a tiger have intelligence like a human being? Yet, even he became humble at his feet. Indescribable are Baba's actions!

126. Listen to an interesting story illustrating this, with careful attention. You will then realise Baba's all-pervasive nature and the same concern that he had for all living beings.

127. A miracle happened once in Shirdi. Seven days before Baba's *Mahanirvan*, a bullock cart came to the door of the courtyard and stood there.

128. In it was a huge tiger, tightly tied with a chain round his neck, with its fierce face facing the back.

129. The tiger was suffering from some disease. His owners who were *dervishes* having failed to cure him so far, decided to bring him to a Saint, which is the best and last resort.

130. There were three *dervishes* and the tiger was the means of their livelihood. By exhibiting him, from village to village, they earned their bread.

131. While they were in the vicinity, they heard of Baba's *leelas* and decided to have *darshan* along with the tiger. They said: "Let us go and take *darshan*, and take the tiger also.

132. "His feet are like the wish – fulfilling gem; the eight *siddhis* prostrate at his feet; the nine – *nidhis* roll at his feet; and take the *tirth* from the washings of his feet.

133. "Let us go and place our heads at his feet and ask blessings for the tiger. All of us will achieve our welfare, if we are favoured with his words of blessings".

134. For this purpose, those *dervishes* made the tiger get down near the door of the *Masjid*. Holding the chain firmly they stood waiting at the door.

135. To begin with, the tiger was very fierce and frightful. Moreover it

was ridden with an incurable malady. Therefore it was very restless. Everyone was watching fascinated.

136. The *dervishes* told Baba about the condition of the tiger in detail and after getting Baba's consent came to the door to fetch him.

137. Securing his chain tighter lest he should break loose, they brought him before Baba with care.

138. When the tiger came near the steps, seeing Sai's divine effulgence, it is difficult to explain, why he was taken aback and hung his head down with great reverence.

139. Then, observe the miracle! As the tiger climbed the steps, and they saw each other, the tiger looked at Baba with love.

140. It fluffed the tuft of its tail and thrashed the ground thrice with it. Then fell lifeless at Sai's feet.

141. He gave just one mighty roar and fell down dead at that very spot. The people were surprised that the tiger had died.

142. The *dervishes* were at first much dejected. But later, they seemed glad that this diseased animal, who was expected to die, had attained a release.

143. Death in the presence of Saints and Sages is immensely meritorious, whether it be a worm, an insect or a tiger. All their sins are pardoned.

144. "This tiger must have been indebted to us in the past life, which he repaid and became free of debt. He died at the feet of Sai. Wonderful are the workings of fate!"

145. Anyone who dies while placing the head at the feet of a Saint, he gets himself delivered and gains the benefits of a lifetime.

146. Unless one is very fortunate, can one merely leave the body in the presence of a Saint? He will attain salvation.

147. It is immense bliss to leave one's body in the presence of a Saint. Even the poison becomes nectar. Death is a pleasure and not a sorrow.

148. One who dies, in the presence of and at the feet of a Saint, is blessed and is merged with God, never to be born again.

149. Dying in the presence of Saints is not death but the bliss of heaven. He has won the transient world and has no worry about re-birth.

150. One who leaves the body in the presence of Saints does not return to this world. All the sins are pardoned, by that, and he is rescued.

151. One who dies looking at a Saint, from the head to his toe nails, can that be called death? It is true self-realisation.

152. Considering the earlier life's achievements, this tiger must have been a virtuous person; but while showing off his pedantic pride slighted some great devotee of God.

153. On account of his (devotee's) curse, he took birth in this cruel form. But by the mitigation of the curse, he came to Sai's feet. Strange are the ways of the great devotees!

154. It appears that the curse was mitigated. His sins were destroyed by Sai's *darshan*. His bondage was broken, his penance was done and he gained salvation effortlessly.

155. Unless one has perfect blessings (good fortune), how can one die in the presence of a saint? The three fold affliction, the trio of your object and action, and the three *gunas* are annihilated. He becomes formless.

156. Thus, because of the merits of past life, he was freed from the bondage of this cruel body and also from the iron chains. This can only be God's decision.

157. If not at the feet of Saints and Sages, where else could there be salvation? When this tiger attained it, the *dervishes* were pleased.

158. The tiger was their means of livelihood and also the means of sustaining their families. Therefore, when this tiger died, the *dervishes* felt sad, also.

159. The *dervishes* asked Maharaj: "What should we do now? How should we bury him? Give him salvation with your own hand".

160. Maharaj said: "Do not grieve. He was destined to die here. He was very meritorious and has now achieved great happiness.

161. "Beyond that *Takkia*, where there is the Shiva temple, take him there and bury him, near *Nandi*.

162. "If you bury him, he will get salvation. He will be freed from your debt and attachment at your hands only.

163. "Being indebted to you in the past life, he has taken this birth to repay your debt. Therefore, he remained your captive till to-day".

164. Then the *dervishes* picked him up and went towards the temple. They buried him behind the *Nandi*.

165. What a miracle happened! How did the tiger suddenly die? If only this much had happened, the people would have forgotten.

166. But, only seven days after this Baba himself left the mortal coil. Because of that, the memory of this incident arises often.

167. The next chapter is more interesting than this. Baba himself tells

about the marvels of his Guru to satisfy Gokhale Bai's wishes and to grant her grace.

168. Hemad surrenders to Sai. Listen to how Baba attained the grace of his Guru, who hanged him upside down over a well.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the thirty-first chapter of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by the Saints and virtuous people, called the "The Greatness of *Darshan*".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Tatyasaheb Nulkar

Blessed was Tatya Noolkar! And blessed was the great devotee Megha! who ultimately breathed their last in Shirdi, while worshipping Sai. (Ch. 31, ovi 119)

32

Narration of the Guru's Greatness

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. In the previous chapter, it was narrated how Vijayanand attained salvation and how Balakram also was happily absorbed at Sai's feet.
2. Similarly, Tatyasaheb Noolkar and the greatest devotee Megha both left their bodies in the presence of Sai.
3. Greater than these was the marvel of the mode of death of a cruel animal like the tiger. That also was heard in detail, by the listeners.
4. Now, in the present chapter, I shall narrate an interesting story told by Baba himself. The listeners will find it immensely beneficial.
5. Once when Baba was in a forest, he had the *darshan* of his Guru, all of a sudden. Listen with full attention to the strange behaviour of the Guru.
6. How can I, an insignificant person, narrate the wonder of that story? It will grant devotion, faith and salvation as Sai himself has said.
7. Also, how a lady desired to have Baba's *darshan*, stay there (at Shirdi) for three days observing a fast, without water.
8. How a situation was created to make her break her resolve and how she was made to cook tasty and well-baked, golden-red *puranpolis*.
9. Not only did he make her prepare the *polis* but feed them to others and herself to the heart's content, teaching her the virtue of using one's body for service to others.
10. He impressed upon her, in a manner she would remember all her life that service rendered to others was higher in merit than the benefits attained from fasting.
11. Also that for the one who wishes to attain the ultimate purpose of

life, how well one should study and how to make great and persistent efforts, regularly, to attain the objective.

12. Stories, emphasising this purport, sweeter than nectar, will arouse devotion amongst the listeners and remove their sorrows.

13. Now, from here onwards the sweet stories which will satisfy the listeners and unite the narrator and the listeners in a bond of common ecstasy.

14. Sai will get these stories, which are amazing and full of love, done through me, who am only a foolish and insignificant person. As I write, I experience their marvel at every step.

15. Just as the sins are removed by the *darshan* of the Ganges or the worldly turmoil by the *darshan* of the moon, Sai's words are effective in destroying all the sins and sorrows.

16. Now, all you listeners, become respectfully attentive to hear the words of Maharaj Sai about the *darshan* of his own Guru.

17. Even if the *Vedas*, *Shrutis*, *Shastras* and like scriptures are studied, there is no acquisition of knowledge without the Guru's grace. It is just a physical and mental exhaustion.

18. This tree of mundane existence, of an immense expanse, which was not visible earlier but which is experienced later, is full of miseries on account of birth and death. It is illusory and perishable.

19. This mundane existence is called a tree because like a tree it can be cut to pieces and hence is perishable. This existence which is not perceptible initially, because at one point of time it remained steady, is, therefore, compared to a tree.

20. This is that tree of mundane existence which is seen but the nature of which is not known. It has its roots above with endless expanse of branches. Very little of this tree comes within the purview of a human being.

21. From moment to moment, it spreads as more branches sprout. Sometimes from a distance they look beautiful, but one finds them prickly all over, if embraced.

22. Like the trunk of a plantain tree, this is devoid of essence (or pith). Like a mirage or like the city of *Gandharvas*, this tree appears very attractive with the surrounding area round the roots clinging on account of the water, in the form of desires.

23. This tree, although non-existent in character, originates from actions and desires rooted in nescience; and has its own character undergoing a change every moment.

24. This tree is of the nature of calamity; has its origin in ignorance. Surrounding this tree is a store of water in the form of desires and lust.

25. This tree is one that has its expanse in the belongings or possessions viz. money, food, son and wife. This tree has as its support the idea of oneness with the body. In fact, this idea is always at the root of this tree.

26. The trunk of this tree, in reality, is the endless beings with gender differences. The many offshoots in the form of branches are formed by actions and sublime impressions. On account of these, this tree continues to grow.

27. This tree is one which is full of leaves in the form of *Shrutis* etc. It throbs with sprouts in the form of primary sensations. It assumes glory in the form of flowers which are actions, including rituals and charity. It is full of the juices of the pairs of opposites.

28. There is no end to the fruits of this tree. On it, indeed depend all beings as well as the worlds like "*Bhur and Bhuva*" for their existence, as they cannot remain separate from the tree.

29. This is like the ancient *Ashwatha* tree which has always a dejected face. At times it is dancing, at times singing and at other times playing instruments. Sometimes it is full of sport, laughter and at times, it weeps.

30. The appearance of this tree is really within *Brahman*. This can be cut by the sword of detachment. This is that tree which has for its support pure roots. Understand this to be of the nature of effulgence.

31. That *Brahman* is Truth and is the support for everything. This world is of an illusory nature like a dream. Surely neither has this tree a beginning nor an end. How can it exist only in the middle?

32. It is for this purpose that those who are detached, toil. The holy are ever attached to it. This is the goal of those who seek liberation and is the coveted end for all aspirants.

33. Try to stay at the place which you like. Do aspire to take refuge at the feet of Saints. Listen with attention to all that they say and take care to do away with doubts from their very roots.

34. Controlling the mind utterly, root out the intellect. Try to become totally detached and continue to gaze at the feet of the Guru.

35. Eradicate completely all fake beliefs, which otherwise will create impediments on the way. Trample under your feet all conceit. Then only will you be able to reach the other shore.

36. Listen to a sweet story, which elucidates this, and which Baba himself narrated. Savouring the nectar of Guru's words, you will have great pleasure:

37. "Once, the four of us, having read the *Shastras* and the *Puranas*, began to describe the *Brahman*, believing ourselves to be very knowledgeable.

38. One of our group, quoted the *Gita*'s words about 'salvation by self-effort', decried the tendency to depend on anyone else for one's salvation.

39. To this, the second replied that he who controls his mind is blessed; and that we should be free from thoughts and ideas and there is nothing in the world except our own Self.

40. The third said that the world is always changing. The formless is eternal. So we should discriminate between the Real and the Unreal – the Permanent and the Transitory.

41. The fourth one did not approve of bookish knowledge and suggested that the prescribed duty should be carried out and we should surrender our body, mind and the five *pranas* at the Guru's feet.

42. The Guru is God, and all pervading. To get this conviction, strong unbounded faith is necessary.

43. Those who know the scriptures, those who are pedagogues, always ready for arguments and discussions, and those who raise unnecessary doubts and sceptisms, they do not achieve complete knowledge even in their dreams. What is necessary is a person full of faith and devotion.

44. Thus, we four 'wise' men set forth in the quest of *Brahman* which can be experienced independently through one's intellect and a mind free of anxiety.

45. Three of the group had this objective. While wandering in the forest, according to our own fancy, we met a *Vanjari* [1] on the way, who questioned us.

46. 'The heat is scorching. Why and where are you going?' We replied to him that we were searching the woods.

47. The *Vanjari* then asked us on the nature of our quest and we replied to him ambiguously and evasively.

48. Seeing us rambling aimlessly, he was moved and he said that the forest is dense and impenetrable, and without knowing the woods fully, we should not wander, at random.

49. If we wanted to walk through the forest, we should take a guide

with us; and not exert ourselves unnecessarily at the sultry noon-time.

50. We need not disclose to him the secret of our mission; but we could rest a little, eat a little bit, drink some water and be patient at heart.

51. Though he made a compassionate entreaty, we contemptuously discarded his request and proceeded further; and felt greatly tired on the way.

52. We had an arrogant attitude that we were all very knowledgeable and could find our own way and needed no guide.

53. But that forest was very vast and full of massive trees. Where the rays of the sun could not penetrate through the dense foliage, how could we find our way?

54. We lost our way and wandered here and there fruitlessly. Through sheer good luck, we reached the same place from where we had started.

55. It was destiny that brought us back to the same path. We met the earlier *Vanjari* who said to us that it seemed that we had missed the way. 'Sometimes mere intelligence is not enough'.

56. 'A guide is always necessary to show the right way in small or great matters. No quest can be successfully carried out on an empty stomach. The flaws of the intellect are strange.

57. Unless God wills it, no one meets us on the way. Do not refuse offers of food or thrust away a platter of food.

58. Believe it to be very auspicious, if someone gives food and urges you to eat. It will help you to succeed in your undertaking.'

59. He again offered us food and asked us to eat, and to be calm and patient. But again this good suggestion was not approved and we left again, without partaking of the refreshment.

60. 'Without accomplishing our quest, we refuse to take any food.' Then see what obstacles were encountered, thanks to our obstinacy.

61. Now, I was hungry and my throat was parched with thirst. The *Vanjari's* love was extraordinary and I experienced the marvel of it.

62. We were educated and learned but had no acquaintance with kindness and compassion. A rich man, when his right hand is covered with food, does not even drive away the crow, lest the particles of food would fly off and there would be a loss to that extent.

63. Yet this *Vanjari*, illiterate and unqualified, of a low caste, had a heart full of love and offered us a share in his food, saying 'eat some bread and vegetable'.

64. He who loves others disinterestedly, is really enlightened. I thought acceptance of his hospitality was the best beginning for getting Knowledge.

65. Therefore, very respectfully I accepted the little food the *Vanjari* offered, and drank the water. See, what miracle happened then!

66. Gururaj came unexpectedly and said: "What was the reason for the argument?" Then I related to him all that occurred, from the beginning to the end.

67. "Would you like to come with me? I will help you to complete your search speedily; but only he who obeys me implicitly will succeed".

68. The others did not agree to this. But, I accepted it with profound reverence. The others left and then the Gururaya took me along with him.

69. He took me to a well, where he tied both my feet with a rope, then left me dangling upside down over the well water.

70. Gururaya left me suspended over the well in such a way that my hands did not touch the water and neither could the water enter my mouth.[2]

71. Gururaya tied the other end of the rope to a tree which was on the side of the well and went away confidently. No one knew where.

72. He returned after four or five hours and took me out quickly. He asked me, if I was fine.

73. Then I replied to him: "I was in supreme bliss. The joy I experienced is beyond my poor powers to describe".

74. Hearing these words of mine, Gururaya was delighted. Stroking my body with his hand, he kept me with him.

75. My heart still overflows with joy; as I narrate this. Then the Guru took me to the 'school'. He took care of me as tenderly as a mother bird does her young ones, protecting them under her wings.

76. How wonderful was the Guru's school! I became detached from my parents' love and the chains of greed and love snapped. I attained salvation easily.

77. Nothing appeared impossible. My evil tendencies vanished. My previous *karmas* were wiped out. I thought I should embrace this Guru's neck and remain staring at him always.

78. If his image was not reflected in the eyes, then they were only balls of flesh! Better still, I would have preferred to be blind. Such was the effect of the school on me!

79. Which unfortunate individual would have wanted to leave the precincts of this school having once entered it? My Gururaya was my mother, my father, my property – everything to me.

80. All the senses, together with the mind, concentrated themselves in my eyes to meditate on him.

81. The Guru was the sole object of my meditation. The entire universe assumed his form. I was conscious of none else. This is known as 'Singular Devotion'.

82. Meditating on the form of the Guru, the mind and intellect were baffled. Therefore, in the end, I could only pay obeisance to him, wordlessly.

83. If one cannot achieve this state, then one may take a Guru to acquire Knowledge but his *upadesh* will be a big zero. One would pay large sums as *dakshina* and repent in the end.

84. Such a Guru emptily chats about his secret knowledge and makes a show of his purity and straight-forwardness. He who has learnt hypocrisy from his childhood, what can he give, in the end to another?

85. There is a great show and pomp of sacredness but not real tender love. No actual experience exists. His school is useless.

86. Where words about knowledge abound, the knowledge of the *Brahman* can never be experienced. Where a Guru is busy singing his own glory, how can the disciple achieve his own welfare?

87. He whose words do not touch the heart and the disciples are not convinced, of what value is his position as Guru? His words are useless prattle.

88. So be it – enough! But in my case, I served my Guru in such a way that he rewarded me with the store of Knowledge. I did not have to search for anything or seek any deeper significance.

89. By the Guru's grace, realisation flashed upon me by itself, without effort or study. I had not to seek anything but everything became clear to me as broad daylight.

90. Only the *Samartha* Gururaya knows my happiness over the topsy turvy suspension, with head down and feet up, that the Gururaya had done.

91. The ways of Saints are something different, which can be understood only through experience. Here, faith alone is the consideration and the only means to attain the objective is Guru's Grace.

92. A *Karmath* knows how to observe and abstain from certain rites; a

Gnyani is puffed with pride of knowledge; a *Yogi* is a hypocrite. In reality nothing can be achieved without faith.

93. The *Pandits* are blinded by conceit and are pride personified. The *Gnyanis* run away from them, and they do not like each other's company.

94. The *Gnyani* says: 'There is no God but me for I have attained all knowledge and I am that Pure Consciousness'.

95. A *Bhakta* (devotee), because of his faith and devotion, does not show off his knowledge. He is totally surrendered to the Guru and serves his Guru with his body, his mind and all that he possesses.

96. He does not have the conceit to believe that this is his achievement or that this is the greatness of his prowess or that this is the brilliance of his knowledge.

97. Whatever happens is caused by God. He elevates and he degrades. He fights and causes fights. He alone is the doer.

98. Leaving all doership to the Guru, he adopts utter humility. A devotee is always dependent upon God and he is not independent.

99. Enough! What were these four wise men in search of? It has not been mentioned so far. Listen now to the explanation.

100. All these *Karmath*, well-versed in the way of reciting *Vedas*, full of pride on account of their learning, who in the course of a pedantic discussion, began to discuss God.

101. It was their objective to identify God and the place of His existence, and search out paths to Him, through endeavour and knowledge.

102. Sree Sai was one of the four wise men. He was the personification of discrimination and dispassion, being himself *Parabrahma*. Then, why did he get involved in this injudicious talk?

103. The listeners will naturally have this doubt. This was for the good of the public. Would Sai *Samartha*, the uplifter of his devotees, be belittled by this incident?

104. Though an incarnation himself, he respected a *Vanjari* by accepting his food with the firm belief that 'Food is *Brahman*', and spoke highly of it.

105. Also, he showed how those that rejected the offer suffered and how it was impossible to get knowledge without a Guru, by narrating the story of these wise men.

106. Religious Knowledge is not possible without the instruction and

teachings of the mother, the father and the preceptor. It also depends on the studies which without application is a waste.

107. The *Shruti* exhorts us to honour and worship mother, father and the preceptor and obtain their powerful blessings.

108. The blessings of the three combined with *Yagnas*, learning of the scriptures and charity are the best means of avoiding the cycle of birth and death.

109. These are the means of purifying the mind and unless this purification is effected, self-realisation is not possible. Such a life has been lived in vain.

110. The body, the senses, the mind and the intellect cannot understand the profound Real Self. It is the Guru's Grace that makes it possible.

111. Where modes of proof, such as perception and inference do not help in the matter, who else but the Guru can show it as easily as holding an *amalak* fruit.

112. The objects of our life such as *Dharma*, *Artha*, and *Kama* are attainable with effort; but the fourth object *Pursharath* can be only had with the help of the Guru, without whom they will remain efforts in vain.

113. In the *durbar* of this saint of Shirdi, the astrologers came and paid their homage, giving the prediction for the young and the old.

114. The rich and the prosperous, the rulers great and petty, the *jogis* who beg for alms, the ascetics devoid of desire and attachments came with equal eagerness for *darshan*.

115. The *sanyasis*, who chanted the Lord's Name, who practised penances, who took vows, the pilgrims from holy places, the musicians, the dancers came to Shirdi for *darshan* with their families.

116. The *harijans* also arrived in Sree Sai's *durbar* to pay obeisance, with the belief that he is the only mother and father who would help in ending the cycle of births and deaths.

117. They came too, who wear the *lingam* round their necks and smear ashes upon their foreheads and accept only uncooked grain and alms to see this festive progression.

118. The cunning jugglers came. The *Gondhalis* lovingly created confusion, and begged for alms in the name of Goddess Bhavani, with great love, from Baba.

119. The blind, the lame and the deaf, the *jogis*, the followers of Guru Nanak, the Bhats, the torch-bearers all came running with affection for Sai *Samartha*.

120. The *Dugdugas* [3], the *Sarodes* [4], the lame and *Kolhatinis* [5] also came. Now, in good time this *Vanjari* had also arrived.

121. Blessed was Sai's form, moulded out of detachment. He was desireless, free of attachments, selfless and full of incomparable love for the devotees.

122. Enough. Now let us pick up again the thread of the main story. The listeners should pay attention.

123. Baba never fasted nor permitted others to remain hungry. The mind of a person observing a fast is never at ease, then how can he attain his *Parmartha*?

124. 'God cannot be attained on an empty stomach. First, the Soul has to be appeased (by satisfying the physical hunger).' I will narrate one more story pertinent to this advice, for the benefit of the listeners.

125. When at noon, the bowels are churned with hunger, the importance and truth of the saying that 'food is *Brahman*' is realised.

126. It is a very difficult situation indeed, when some food is not put into the mouth. All the sensory organs become weak and are unable to function properly.

127. If there is no moisture of food in the stomach, with what eyes should we see God, with what tongue should we describe His greatness and with what ears should we listen to it?

128. In short, when all the sense organs are strong and sound, then only it is possible to practise devotion. If one feels weak by starving, then one is unable to make progress towards the highest goal of life.

129. Consumption of too much food is not beneficial. Moderation is really wholesome. Extreme fasting is dangerous. It leads to affliction always.

130. Once, a lady came to Shirdi for Sai's *darshan* with a letter to Shri Kelkar, with great enthusiasm.

131. The lady had resolved to sit at Maharaj's feet and observe a three days' fast. But her resolve came to naught.

132. Baba, in accordance with his precepts, believed that when thinking about the highest goal in life, one should have some food alongside.

133. One who desires to realise God must eat a little, to begin with; for unless the being is content, how would God be realised?

134. It is impossible to realise God when one is starving. Sai did not approve of such austerities which burden one.

135. Maharaj, who knew intuitively, on the previous day, had mentioned it to Dada Kelkar earlier.

136. "Now during these Holi holidays, will my children go without food? How can I allow it? Then why should I be here?"

137. The day following this utterance of Sai, this lady arrived in Shirdi.

138. The lady's surname was Gokhale. As she had earlier resolved, she left her luggage at Dada's and gave him the letter.

139. Kashibai Kanitkar, being related, had written a letter to Dada, requesting him to make arrangements for Sai Baba's *darshan*, for her.

140. As soon as she arrived at Shirdi, she went for Baba's *darshan*. Afterwards, she sat near him for a while, when she was advised by Baba.

141. Sainath was aware of the innermost thoughts of everyone for nothing on this earth was hidden from him.

142. "Food and the one who eats it are the embodiments of Vishnu. Fasting, austerities, unsullied food, going without any food or water – why indulge in this?

143. "What is the need for us to practise fasting and austerities?" Baba said this on his own, to her.

144. "Go to that Dada Bhat's[6] house, make *puran polis* happily. Feed them to his children and eat also to your heart's content".

145. It was a happy concidence that the lady had arrived at the time of the *Holi* festival. Dada's wife, at that time, was in her menses and therefore, could not do the cooking herself.

146. The intense desire to observe fast disappeared, as she had to cook herself! Then, she very lovingly obeyed Baba's orders.

147. Making obeisance at Baba's feet, she went to Dada's house, made *puranpolis*, served everyone and ate herself.

148. What a beautiful story and how profound its meaning. If one places faith, in this manner, in the Guru's words, then there would be no delay in upliftment.

149. Yet another story – one narrated by Sai *Samartha* to his devotees, of which he was reminded. Please listen carefully.

150. One who is desirous of spiritual progress needs to work hard and constantly study. One should be bold and courageous.

151. One should always savour the nectar of the true stories, like the washings of the saint's feet, for one's welfare. Being humble at a saint's feet gives internal purity.

152. "Once, when I was young, and wishing to get a job to sustain me, I stinted on my own needs and set out.

153. "I walked on and on and arrived at Beedgaon, where I rested. The Fakir (God) had other plans for me. I was happy.

154. "There, I found zari (embroidery) work. I also worked tirelessly and my efforts were rewarded. Behold the Fakir's power!

155. "Those who were employed before me were extremely clever and skilled. All four of us worked there and our wages were fixed on the quantum of work done.

156. "One had done work worth Rs. 50/-, the second had done Rs. 100/- worth; the third had done Rs.150/- worth; and mine was twice more than all of them put together.

157. "The owner was very pleased with my work and skill. He praised me to many and loved me a lot.

158. "He gave me a full dress, a turban for the head and a magnificent robe[7] for the body. But I kept it tied up, unused.

159. "Who can give enough to another person? However much is given, it is always inadequate. But when my *Sarkar* (God) begins, it lasts till the end of time.

160. "The only true giver is my *Sarkar*. Can any else be compared with Him? How can the finite be the ornament of the infinite?

161. "My *Sarkar* says 'take, take'; but everybody comes to me and says 'give, give'. Nobody attends carefully to the meaning of what I say. No one takes cognisance.

162. "My *Sarkar*'s treasury is overflowing. No one comes to fetch cart loads away. When I say 'dig' no one does so. No one wants to make efforts.

163. "I say 'dig up this wealth and plunder cart loads of it. The blessed son of a true mother should fill his store with this wealth'.

164. "What will be the fate of a living being? Dust (body) will turn to dust, and air (breath) will merge with air. This time will not come again.

165. "Enough. The skill of my Fakir, the leela of my *Bhagvan*, the aptitude of my *Sarkar* is quite unique.

166. "I too go somewhere and sit somewhere. But this '*Jeeva*' is

confused and confounded by '*Maya*'. It suffers from the snares of *Maya*.

167. "*Maya* is very merciless. It has driven me to desperation. I remain worried about my people day and night.

168. "He will reap, what he sows'. The one who always remembers these words of mine will get invaluable happiness".

169. Hemad surrenders to Sai. Unparalled is the narration of this story. When Sai does the work himself, my egotism is demolished.

170. Sai himself narrates this story. He is the reader and the listener. He is the writer and the one who gets it written. It is he who makes it comprehensible.

171. Sai himself is the actor in this story, it is he who is the sweetness in the story, it is he who is the listener and the narrator and it is he who enjoys its bliss.

172. Then, the privilege and pleasure of listening to this story, can it not help in attaining spirituality? Those devotees are fortunate who appreciate and enjoy it.

173. Now in essence the next chapter deals with the incomparable greatness of Sai's UDI. Virtuous listeners I earnestly supplicate you to listen with respect.

174. Hemad says with great humility that Sai *Samartha* graced me and made me narrate his biography, where the stories are most interesting.

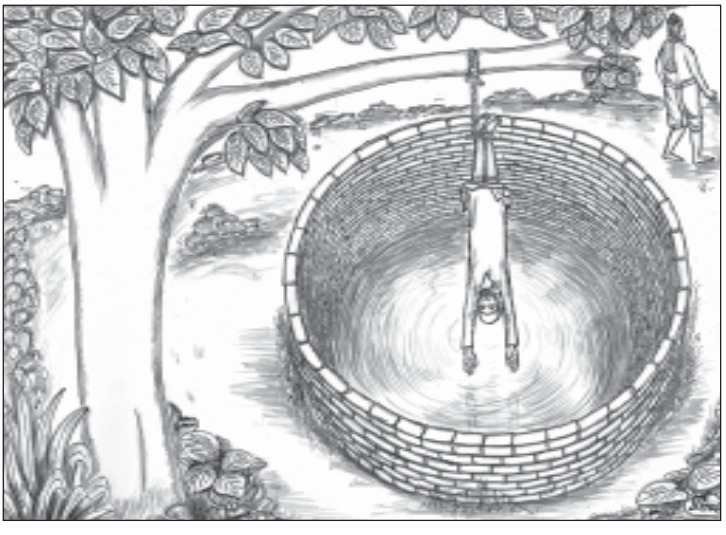
May there be well-being! This is the end of the thirty-second chapter of the Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by the Saints and virtuous people, called the "Narration of the Guru's Greatness".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. A trader who carried salt and grains etc. on the back of a bullock and who knows the paths in the forest; and belongs to the Laman caste.
2. This story should not be taken literally. It is allegorical.
3. Those who imitate the sound of a rickety, shaking article.
4. Those who play the seven-stringed instrument and constantly practise the prediction of good fortune to the lower caste.
5. The rope dancers.
6. Dada Kelkar.
7. Such an outfit was presented as an approbation of conduct and was a great honour.



Gururaya left me suspended over the well in such a way that my hands did not touch the water and neither could the water enter my mouth. (Ch.32, ovi 70)

Gururaya tied the other end of the rope to a tree which was on the side of the well and went away confidently. No one knew where. (Ch.32, ovi 71)

He returned after four or five hours and took me out quickly. He asked me if I was fine. (Ch.32, ovi 72)

Then I replied to him: 'I was in supreme bliss. The joy I experienced is beyond my poor powers to describe'. (Ch.32, ovi 73)

33
The Power of the Udi

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Now I bow down to the saints and the virtuous. Their merciful glances immediately burn mountains of sins and wash away the impurities of the *Kaliyug*.
2. Their heaps of obligations cannot be repaid in this birth, or in many furture births. Their casual talks are full of valuable lessons for our welfare and confer imperishable happiness.
3. Their minds do not know any difference such as 'this is ours and that is yours'. Such worldly differentiation never arises in their minds.
4. In the previous chapter, the Guru's greatness was described to some extent. Now, in this chapter, listeners hear of the importance of *UDI*.
5. Baba repeatedly asked and took *Dakshina* from which he did charity, helping the poor and the needy. From the balance, he purchased a lot of firewood which he piled in heaps.
6. He offered the dry wood as an oblation in the *Dhuni*, in front of him. The ashes from the burnt wood which were considerable, were distributed to the devotees.
7. At the time of departure from Shirdi, while seeking leave from Baba, it was customary to give *Udi*. All the devotees knew this.
8. In fact when Baba asked for *Udi* to be brought, it was felt that it was really the permission granted to leave and they felt happy to return home.
9. Also, when one was residing at Shirdi, Baba did not give *Udi* to anyone in the afternoon, morning or evening. One was sent back empty handed.

10. This was a daily routine. But what was the significance of that *udi* for which the *dhuni* was kept alight perpetually in the *Masjid*. Why was this done daily?

11. What did Baba hint at, or have in his mind, when giving the *vibhuti* ? "All this visible phenomena in the universe is as transient as the ashes. Bear this definitely in mind.

12. "The body itself, like that drywood, is made up of the five elements, and remains to endure life. When the life span is over, it falls dead and will be certainly reduced to ashes.

13. "You and I will undergo the same stages. So that you should remember this and I should also be aware of it, day and night, I give the *vibhuti*.

14. "The entire universe is full of *Maya*. *Brahman* is the only reality, while the universe is illusory. Bear this in mind that this is what the *udi* teaches.

15. "No person belongs to anyone in this world – be they wife, son, uncles or nephews. Naked you come and naked you will return. The *udi* is a reminder of it".

16. If this *udi* is applied to the body, then physical and mental sufferings are cured. But the true significance of the *udi* is deep and it is meant for discriminatory detachment.

17. Giving as much as possible as *dakshina* develops a tendency towards detachment. Later on one is able gradually to know what detachment is.

18. Even if one acquires detachment, if it is not accompanied by discretion, it is useless. Therefore, honour the *vibhuti*.

19. To bring together discrimination and detachment both *udi* and *dakshina* are linked. Unless we have both, at the same time, it is very difficult to cross over the river of existence.

20. The young and the old came for *darshan* and humbled themselves at Baba's feet. Whenever they returned Baba gave them *vibhuti*.

21. The *Dhuni* was kept alight regularly in the *Masjid*. It burned day in and day out, throughout the year. Baba gave a handful of the ashes from it, when bidding farewell.

22. He gave the ashes as *prasad*, smeared it with his thumb on the forehead and together with it placed his hand on the head, wishing for the well-being of the devotees.

23. Ashes, *vibhuti* and *udi* are three words with the same meaning. This was the *prasad* distributed daily in unlimited quantity by Baba.

24. This world is like the *udi*. This is the real importance of *udi*. Bear it in mind and you will realise it one day.

25. Like the drops of water on the petals of the lotus, this evanescent body will fall, therefore abandon all pride in it. The giving of *udi* showed this.

26. This expanse of the whole universe is like a *rangoli* design drawn with ashes. Think about the illusory nature of the world and the reality abides only in the *Udi*.

27. *Udi* is only dust. All existence, which has name and form, ultimately reaches the same state. Whatever changes are observed in the world, they are only for name's sake. This is experienced from the never-changing qualities of dust.

28. When Baba was in a joyful mood, he used to sing. The listeners should hear with respect an interesting snatch from one of his songs.

29. "O playful Ram has come! And brought sacks of *Udi* ", were the two lines he sang. Whenever he was in a happy and joyous mood, he sang this refrain repeatedly, in a melodious voice.

30. In brief, how many sacksful of *udi* has this *dhuni* produced? None is capable of counting them. This *udi* is supremely beneficial.

31. After listening to the deep purport in giving this *udi*, and its spiritual and devotional significance, the listeners want to know its effect on purely worldly matters of health and prosperity.

32. *Udi* has this quality also. Otherwise how could its importance increase? Sai is proficient in showing the path of salvation. After helping the devotees in mundane matters, he leads them to spiritual progress.

33. There are innumerable stories about the ways in which the *udi* benefitted the people for their health and prosperity. But mindful of the length of this book, I shall briefly relate just a few of them.

34. Once there lived in Nashik, a Brahmin cook called Narayan Motiram, whose surname was Jani.

35. Similarly, there was another devotee of Baba called Ramchandra Vaman Modak. This Narayanrao was in his service; and was also a faithful devotee of Baba.

36. When Baba was in body, Narayanrao went to Shirdi with his mother for Baba's *darshan*.

37. At that time Baba had suggested to her that the time had come for her son to cease serving others. "Now his connection is only with me.

38. "Enough of this servility. It is better to have one's own business". Later on, after a short while, God was merciful to him.
39. His dependence on his job ended and he began to enjoy his freedom. He established a boarding and lodging place of his own.
40. He named it *Anandashram*, worked hard for it, and soon turned it into a flourishing business which gave him satisfaction.
41. Seeing how things transpired, his faith in Sai increased and later grew into firm devotion which was confirmed by experience.
42. The truth of Sai's words was experienced. The listeners got another story to hear, and their love for Sai increased. Inexplicable are the deeds of Sai.
43. Sai always spoke in the first person but it was always meant for someone else. For those who observed him carefully, this was a regular experience.
44. Later, as he got more experiences, the grandeur of Narayanrao's devotion and love increased. Listen to one more novel experience of his with devotion.
45. Enough. One day, a friend of Narayanrao was stung by a scorpion, all of a sudden and suffered intense and unbearable pain.
46. Baba's *udi* was very efficacious, if applied on the seat of pain. But though Narayanrao searched for it, he was unable to find any.
47. His friend was unable to bear the agony and the *Udi* could not be found anywhere. So he took a *darshan* of Baba's picture and prayed fervently to Baba.
48. Then just near that picture, the ash from the joss-sticks, which had been burned earlier before it, was lying and he treated it as if it were *udi* only.
49. Taking a pinch from it, and chanting Sai's name, he smeared it where his friend was stung. The experience matched the faith.
50. It will be a great marvel to hear that no sooner was the ash applied with the finger that the pain disappeared, as quickly as it had come, and both were choked with love[1].
51. At least in this case it was the ash from the joss-sticks, which was applied to one who was in pain. But, even if dust from the road is applied, treating it as if it were *udi*, it grants the same experience.
52. The application of this dust, not only to an ailing person or someone diseased, but to anyone else is beneficial.
53. Once, the daughter of a devotee was suffering from plague. When this news reached her father suddenly, from another village, he was worried.

54. The father lived in Bandra, while the daughter lived in another village. He had no stock of *udi* with him, so he sent a message to Nana[2].

55. "Kindly pray to Baba to remove my anxiety", he requested Chandorkar and asked him to send *udi* as *prasad*.

56. The messenger met Nana on the way, as he was going to Kalyan with his wife, at that time.

57. Nana received this message at Thane, near the railway station. Since he found no *udi* with him, he picked up a little dust from the ground.

58. Standing there on the road, invoking Sai *Samartha*, and turning around[3] applied a pinch to his own wife's forehead.

59. On the other hand, the devotee left for the village where his daughter lived. There he was very happy when he received the joyful tidings.

60. The girl had suffered from very high fever for three days. She had been shattered by the suffering; but since a day earlier, she was a little comfortable.

61. Inquiries revealed that the recovery began at the same time that Nana had pleaded before Sai and applied the dust as *udi* to his wife's forehead.

62. Enough of this story about the illness. At the opportune time, it will be related in detail. This was an anecdote concerning the *udi*.

63. Sai, ever ready to work for the welfare of his devotees, performed a miracle when this very same, loving Chandorkar was the Mamlatdar at Jamner. Listen to it.

64. The greatness of this *udi* is beyond limits. If the listeners are willing, I shall narrate another miracle which will astound them.

65. Nana's daughter, who was in labour, was in intense pain; and from Jamner Sai *Samartha* was being invoked constantly.

66. No one at Shirdi was aware of the state of affairs at Jamner. Baba, however, knows everything and is all-pervading. There is nothing in the universe that he is unaware of.

67. Baba was one with his devotees. Realising the circumstances at Nana's home Sai *Samartha's* heart overflowed with compassion. See what he did immediately!

68. He thought of sending *udi*. At the same time Gosavi Ramgir Buva had an urge to go to his village.

69. His village was in Khandesh. He made all preparations to leave and came to the *Masjid* to take *darshan* and be at Baba's feet.

70. For no one left Shirdi for any work without touching Baba's feet and obtaining his permission, as long as he was in body.

71. Whether it was a wedding, or a thread ceremony, or some auspicious function as per *shastric* rituals, or any other work or the intention to perform some work, Baba's permission was necessary.

72. Everyone was firmly convinced that without his whole-hearted permission, *prasad* of *udi* and blessings, no function would proceed smoothly.

73. This being the custom of that village, Ramgir came in accordance with it, touched Baba's feet and asked permission to leave.

74. He said: "Baba, I am going to my village in Khandesh. Give me *udi* and blessings and your permission to this servant to leave".

75. Baba affectionately called him by the name 'Bapugir'. He replied: "Go happily to your village. But rest a while on the way.

76. "Go first to Jamner and stay at Nana's home. After inquiring about his well-being, then proceed further".

77. Then he said to Madhavrao Desphande: "Shama, make a copy on a piece of paper of that Arati of Adkar and send it to Nana with the Gosavi".

78. Then he gave *udi* to the *Gosavi* and made a small packet of it and placing it in his hand asked him to give it to Nana.

79. "Take both the *udi* and *arati* and give them to Nana. Inquire after his well-being, and then proceed to go to your village," he said.

80. This '*Arati* Saibaba', is like 'Dñyaneshwar's *Arati* ' composed by Rama Janardan. They both have the same tune.

81. Rama Janardan was a devotee of Swami Janardan, while Madhav Adkar was devoted to Sai's feet. This was an inspired composition and without it, Sai's worship is incomplete.

82. As Baba liked this *Arati* very much, listeners should hear this arati from beginning to end, which Baba sent with the *udi*. Later, you will realise the fruits of it.

Arati

Refrain:

'We do *Arati* to Sai Baba, the giver of happiness to all. Give refuge to the downtrodden and to your devotees who are at your feet. We do *Arati* to Sai Baba.

Burn up the desires. To those who are engrossed in the Self, teach them to obtain *Moksha*. Let them see the Lord *Shrirang*[4], with their own eyes. Lord *Shrirang*. We do *Arati*...

You grant suitable experiences to everyone in accordance with their faith and devotion. O' merciful one! such is your own way. Your own way. We do *Arati*.....

Meditation upon your name removes the worldly sufferings of all. Unfathomable is your action. Show the path to the unfortunate ones. Show the unfortunate ones. We do *Arati*.....

In this age of *Kaliyug*, you are the true *Brahma Avatar*, that has taken form and descended on this earth. You are also Swami Dutta Digambar[5]. Dutta Digambar. We do *Arati*.....

Once a week, on Thursdays, the devotees take a trip to have a glimpse of the Lord's feet and to avert their worldly fears. Avert fears. We do *Arati*.....

The only wealth that I desire is to serve at your feet, O' Lord of Lords. We do *Arati*.....

Just as the Chatak bird desires to drink pure water[6] so give me Madhava, knowledge directly O' Lord! And kindly give me your assurance. Your assurance. We do *Arati*.....'.

83. The Gosavi said to Baba: "I have altogether two rupees with me. Baba, how will I reach Jamner with only this amount?".

84. Baba said: "Go without any care. Everything will be arranged for you." Having full faith in Sai's Words, the Gosavi set out.

85. Taking these instructions from Baba, and obeying his orders, Bapugir left for the assigned work immediately, after taking the *udi* as *prasad*.

86. During those days, there was no rail route to Jamner, as it is now; and it was not easy to make the journey. So the Gosavi was worried.

87. Setting out in the train, the passengers had to alight at Jalgaon, from where they had to go on foot the rest of the distance.

88. After paying the train fare of Rupee one and 14 *annas*, there remained only 2 *annas*. How was he to go further?

89. These were the thoughts causing the Gosavi worry at Jalgaon station. When he came out, after handing over the ticket, he saw a peon at some distance.

90. The peon seemed to be in search of some one. He approached the passengers and asked: "Tell me who is Bapugir from Shirdi".

91. Knowing that, that peon's inquiry was only meant for him, the Gosavi came forward and said: "Yes, I am that person. Tell me what you want".

92. He said : "Chandorkar has sent me for you. Come quickly and get into the *tonga*. He is waiting for you".

93. The Buva was greatly pleased and he felt that a message must have reached Nana from Shirdi to enable him to send a *tonga* on time, which had saved him a lot of trouble.

94. The peon looked very smart, with a beard, twirled moustache, and side – burns, wearing a livery. The *tonga* also looked well maintained.

95. The horses matched the *tonga*. They were certainly not hired out animals. Leaving other *tongas* behind they moved ahead due to their eagerness.

96. The *tonga* had started for the journey around 2.48 a.m. and was halted at dawn near a stream on the way.

97. Then the *tongawallah* unharnessed the horses to water them and said: "I'll come back soon after which we will have refreshments at leisure.

98. I will fetch a little water and then we will eat mangoes, *pedas* [7] and *gulpapdi* [7]; then after re-harnessing, the horses we will leave".

99. From his beard and dress he looked a Muslim. Hearing his words, Ramgir had doubts about accepting the refreshments from him.

100. Therefore, he asked him about his caste. He said: "Have you doubts about me? I am a Hindu from Garhwal and a Kshatriya. I am a Rajput by caste.

101. "These refreshments have also been sent by Nana for you with me. Certainly, have not the slightest of doubts. Eat them free of worry".

102. When his doubts were thus removed, they both had the refreshments. The *tonga*-wallah harnessed the horses and the journey came to an end at sunrise.

103. As they entered the village, Nana's office became visible. The horses also stopped for a moment. Ramgir felt happy.

104. The Buva looked for a secluded place in which to relieve himself. When he returned, he was surprised by the sight.

105. No *tonga*, no horses, no *tonga-wallah* could be seen! No one was to be seen at that moment. The place was deserted.

106. Ramgir wondered : 'What is this marvel? After bringing me so far, where has he gone in such a short time?'

107. As he was eager to meet Nana, the Buva went inside the office. When he learned that Nana was at his residence, he decided to go there.

108. Buva inquired the way, along the road, and easily found Nana's home. He reached and sat on the verandah and Nana called him in.

109. They met one another. He took out the *udi* and arati and placed them before Nana and told him the whole story.

110. It was a marvel that, when this *udi* came, Nana's daughter was suffering intensely, due to some obstruction in the delivery.

111. To ward off this difficulty, the Nava–*Chandi* [8] *Havan* [9] and *Saptashati* [10] recitation was in progress. The Gosavi was surprised.

112. Nana then felt as a hungry person feels when a platter of delicacies is placed before him or as a thirsty *chakor* feels when he gets nectar in his mouth.

113. Nana called his wife and gave her the *udi* to administer to his daughter with water and he himself began singing the *Arati*.

114. Within moments, a message was received from the inner quarters, that the girl was better as soon as the cup of *udi* was put to the lips.

115. She was freed from pain immediately and had a safe delivery. The crisis passed away happily. Everybody's worries were over.

116. Then Ramgir asked Nana: "Where did the *tonga-wallah* go? I do not find him here also. Where is the *tonga* that you sent?"

117. Nana replied: "I did not send. I do not know of what *tonga* you are speaking. Who knew that you were coming? Why should I send the *tonga*?".

118. Then Buva told the story of the *tonga*, from the beginning to the end to all. Nana was surprised, thinking about Baba's loving concern for his devotees as his own children.

119. What *tonga*! Which peon! This Sai *Mauli* (Mother) is the Lord of the Universe performing various wonderful feats! At the time of difficulty, he comes running to the devotees because of the intensity of devotion.

120. So be it. Let us go ahead with the story indicated earlier. After some time, Baba himself took *Maha* Samadhi.

121. On *Vijayadashmi*, the festival of *Dassera*, in the year 1918, Baba considered it an auspicious day and chose to leave his body on that day.

122. Then, later, the *Samadhi* was built. Before that, when Baba was in body, Narayanrao had *darshan* twice.

123. Now three years had passed since the *Samadhi*. Though he had an earnest desire to take *darshan*, he could not get a proper opportunity, whereby he was distressed.

124. One year after the *Samadhi*, Narayanrao was distressed by illness. All medications were tried but were of no avail.

125. Though he was tormented by the illness, he meditated day and night upon Baba. How could there be death for the Gururaya? He gave *darshan* to Narayana.

126. One night, he had a dream that Sai was coming from a cellar. He came near Narayanrao and assured him.

127. "Do not worry. You will be better from tomorrow and at the end of one week, you will be able to sit up on your own".

128. So be it. Eight days passed. Every word proved true. Narayanrao was able to sit up and his heart was filled with emotions.

129. After some time, Narayanrao came to Shirdi for the *darshan* of the *Samadhi* when he narrated this experience.

130. Can he be called living only when he was in body? How can it be said that he is dead when he has taken *Samadhi*? Sai transcends life and death, pervading the entire universe.

131. Just as fire is inherent in the firewood though not visible and which ignites when rubbed, this Sai is for his devotees.

132. Once when one sees him with love, then he becomes his slave for the rest of his life. He is hungry only for the singular love and responds to the call of such a person.

133. No special place or time is needed for him to be present. He is, for ever, everywhere. How and what means he uses is beyond anyone's comprehension.

134. Sometimes he creates such situations that we are filled with unreasonable doubts. At such times, concentrate on his feet and ability to meditate will increase.

135. If the mind concentrates in this way, then one can achieve deep meditation on Sai. This is what Sai gets done and it is achieved without any obstacles.

136. It is not necessary to refrain from routine activities. All desires will disappear on their own. If the mind is thus trained all work will be accomplished without efforts.

137. Since this body has come to this earth, which is the theatre of action, one will have to engage in actions, inevitably. Then why not amass enough of wealth and property and have wife and progeny?

138. Whatever happens let it happen to the fullest. Let us deeply desire

only meditation on the *Sadguru*. Doubts and delusions will be destroyed. The predestined difficulties will be warded off.

139. Considering the devotion of the devotee, how Sai eminent for genius, learning and valour, gives the devotees a variety of experiences and increases the grandeur of devotion!

140. He adopts any mode of dress and manifests anywhere at will. He roams anywhere for the welfare of the devotees. All that is required is that the disciple should be devoted.

141. Please listen with reverence to another story which has a similar bearing. Hear how the saints toil day and night for the sake of their devotees.

142. Open the doors of your ears, and unlock the temple of your heart and let this story touch the very core of your being. It will drive away the fears of mundane existence.

143. In the past year, for the well known war with the Germans, an army was needed to be amassed to fight against the enemy.

144. The British Officers, posted in India, were recruiting persons, from all the cities in all the quarters.

145. A devotee's turn to be recruited came in 1917 from Thane District. The story took a new turn.

146. His name was Appasaheb Kulkarni. He was devoted to Sai. This also was Sai's grace. His *leelas* are unfathomable.

147. Many years back he had obtained a picture of Baba from Balasaheb Bhate, which he worshipped.

148. With his whole heart, he regularly worshipped the picture with available sandalwood paste, consecrated rice and flowers and offered *naivedya*.

149. Appa's heart ached for opportunity of Sai's *darshan* in person. 'When will I be free from ties of *karma*? When will my heart's desire be fulfilled?'

150. The *darshan* of Sai Baba's picture is itself a *darshan* in person. There should be only total devotion. You will get proof of this in time.

151. Taking *darshan* of the picture is equivalent to taking *darshan* in person. Listeners should hear with reverence a description to this extent.

152. Once Balabuva Sutar, a *Bhajan* singer, resident of Bombay, known as the Modern Tukaram, went to Shirdi for *darshan*.

153. This was the first meeting. They had never met before. But the moment they saw one another, Sai clearly said to him.

154. "I have known him since the last four years". Bala Buva was surprised. "Why does he say so?

155. "Baba has never left Shirdi. I too have laid my eyes on this place for the first time. Then, how is it that he has known me since the last four years?".

156. Thinking thus repeatedly, he recollected an incident which had happened four years ago. Bua remembered bowing to Baba's picture once.

157. Then Balabuva immediately understood the significance of those words, and said: "See, how all-pervading are the saints and their love and affection for the devotees.

158. "I had just bowed to a picture. I saw him in person to-day. Whereas I forgot this a long time back, Baba kept it in mind.

159. "It is not correct to say that I had forgotten but I did not immediately understand the meaning of his words. I did not have the capacity to know that this was the fruit of my *obeisance* to the picture.

160. "Baba knew me; but I had no idea that he remembered me. It is only when the saints remind one that one realises it".

161. One can see the reflection of the sun's or moon's disc in a clean mirror or clear water. A picture is also a pure reflection of the personage by which splendour is cast upon persons serving subordinately.

162. Therefore, the *darshan* of a saint's picture is equivalent to the *darshan* in person. The all-knowing attribute of the saints is the lesson that is learnt by all from this.

163. Enough. The listeners must attentively hear the earlier story now. Bear in mind the previous reference.

164. Appa lived in Thane town. He had some work in Bhivandi. He left his home saying that he would return after eight days.

165. Only two days had passed when something unusual happened at his house. A fakir came to the door of his Thane residence.

166. Everyone who saw him clearly felt that this was Sai himself. He was exactly like the picture, from head to toe, and the figure tallied completely.

167. His wife and children stared at the fakir and everybody was surprised. They felt that Baba himself had come.

168. Though no one had *darshan* in person earlier, from the resemblance to the picture they knew that it was the same Baba. Their curiosity was aroused.

169. All of them asked the fakir: "Are you the same Sai of Shirdi?" Listeners should hear with attention what the fakir replied to them.

170. "In reality, I am not Sai myself but I am his obedient servant. I have come here to inquire about the health of the children by his orders".

171. Later when he asked for *dakshina*, the children's mother respected his words and immediately gave him one rupee. He too gave her *udi*.

172. He gave Sai Baba's *vibhuti* in a small packet to the lady and said: "Keep it near that picture. It will bring you happiness".

173. Completing his mission thus, the fakir took leave with the words, "Sai must be waiting for me"; and he set off on his way.

174. Then he took the way by which he had come. Then see what happened there. Sai's *leela* is inconceivable.

175. Appasaheb who had left for Bhivandi, instead of going further returned as the horses of his *tonga* became sick. His onward journey had to be cancelled.

176. He returned to Thane in the afternoon and learnt all that had transpired. Appasaheb regretted that he missed the *darshan*.

177. He felt ashamed that only one rupee was given as *dakshina*. "If I had been there, I would not have given less than ten rupees before he was sent back".

178. Thus said Appasaheb. He felt dejected and sad. He believed that he would be able to find the fakir in the *Masjid*, so he left to search for him, without eating anything.

179. Appa searched in all the places such as the *Masjid*, *takiya*, and all such places where travellers stay, for the fakir.

180. Though he got exhausted searching he did not trace the fakir anywhere. Being disappointed and hungry he went home and had his meal.

181. But he did not know that one should not set out on a search on an empty stomach. It is necessary to satisfy one's *Atma* and then carry on the search.

182. Baba's story of this purport will show the truth of this principle. Why should it be repeated here? The listeners know that chapter well.

183. In the previous chapter named "Guru's Greatness", a wonderful story has been narrated by Sree Sai, as his own Guru's words very tenderly.

184. The same truth was experienced by Appa, when after lunch he went with his friend Chitre, for a casual walk.

185. Enough. After walking a little distance, he saw a gentleman approaching him very speedily till that spot as if he was desirous of finding him.

186. When he came and stood near Appasaheb, he unobtrusively but carefully looked at him and thought that this must be the same person who had come in the morning.

187. 'I feel that this is the same fakir whom I was searching earlier. He resembles the picture from top to toe. I am confused.'

188. While Appa was debating this within himself, that fakir extended his hand and Appa placed one rupee in his hand at that time.

189. He asked for more and he gave him one more; till he had given three. Yet that fakir asked for more. The real marvel is ahead.

190. Chitre had three rupees, which Appa borrowed and gave to that fakir. Yet he asked for more.

191. Appasaheb told him: "I will give you more if you come home". The fakir agreed and all the three returned home.

192. Immediately on reaching home, he took out and placed three more in his hand, totalling nine rupees. Yet the fakir was not satisfied.

193. When asking for further *dakshina*, Appasaheb truthfully told him that he now had only one ten rupee note left with him.

194. All the change was finished, and there was nothing else left. The fakir said: "Why not give the note"; and Appa did that too.

195. As soon as the note came into his hands, he returned the change of nine rupees and the fakir left the same way he had come, walking with great speed.

196. When one considers the essence of this story, it is, that Sai fulfils the wish of the devotee, as expressed. This was his creed.

197. Considering the enthusiasm of the listeners, I am reminded of another story, having the same purport, at this opportune time. Listen to it with great respect.

198. There was a loving devotee, named Haribhau Karnik, resident of Dahanu. He was a singular devotee of Sai.

199. In the year 1917, as it was the most holy day of *Gurupurnima*, he came for pilgrimage to Shirdi. I will tell a short story about him.

200. He did the worship according to rituals and offered clothes and *dakshina*. When he took permission to leave and came down (the steps), he had a thought.

201. He felt like going up and giving Baba one more rupee. But he had to give up this idea and keep the rupee without offering it.

202. The same gentleman[11] who had got for him the permission to leave, he himself gave him a sign, from up above, that once the permission was granted, one should depart immediately.

203. Having faith in the indication, Karnik left on his way. He got down at Nashik with his friend, on the way.

204. When Karnik went for *darshan* to the temple of Kala Ram, he had unexpected *darshan* of the saint Narsing Maharaj.

205. Maharaj was sitting surrounded by devotees. But he suddenly got up, held Karnik by the wrist and said: "Give me my rupee".

206. Karnik was surprised but joyfully handed over the rupee. He felt that it was Sai, himself, who knowing his desire was accepting the rupee.

207. It is not true to say that Sai accepted it. Though Karnik had forgotten it, he held his hand and by force took it. This is the real truth.

208. Vacillation is the characteristic of the mind. Waves after waves arise. Initially one thinks of something but at a later stage some other thought occurs.

209. The wave of thought which arises initially, provided it is good and virtuous, should be nurtured. This would be beneficial.

210. Bear it in mind. Study it carefully and meditate upon it. Do not forget it and make every effort to keep your word.

211. Appasaheb had spoken of it but later he may have forgotten. But as he had spoken of it, Baba fulfilled his desire and showed the marvel of devotion.

212. Otherwise, why did the fakir who had nineteen rupees with him including the ten rupees note, give Appa nine rupees only? It was because of Appa's intense desire to give ten rupees only.

213. This was the necklace of nine coins, which had been touched by Baba's hands – indicating the nine types of devotion. This was the way Baba reminded him of it.

214. When you listen to the story of Baba leaving his mortal coil, you

will realise the novel way of doing charity, as he had given nine rupees at that time[12].

215. His wife had given only one rupee whole heartedly which had been accepted with great satisfaction and the fakir (Baba) had not asked for more.

216. But Appa felt that the one rupee given by his wife was too little and had he been there, he would have given ten times as much to the fakir.

217. In this way Appa who had become bound by his own words by saying that he would have given ten rupees, how could he have been free from his debt until he had given the full amount as per his words?

218. This fakir was not like the others. Was he a beggar that he would accept whatever was placed in his hand and go back?

219. The day had not ended and he came back on the same day that Appa had spoken. Appa had doubts that he might be an unknown fakir.

220. Initially when he was asked for the money, he had six rupees with him but he did not part with the amount because of the doubts.

221. Enough. If he did not have love for Appa, would Baba have come in the guise of a fakir? If he had not made a pretext for the *dakshina*, how would the story have been interesting?

222. Appasaheb was only an instrument, to teach us, for we are all the same. We start with good resolutions but change them according to the situation.

223. We are most generous with words but at the time of doing charity we are full of doubts. We are torn by vacillation and rarely have certainty.

224. But rarest is that beloved son of God who speaks little and well. He acts as he speaks and he does, what he promises.

225. If there be a devotee with singular faith, whatever be his wishes, worldly or spiritual, Sai has the power to fulfil them.

226. Although Appasaheb was intelligent, and a scholar in English, he was initially given only Rs.40/- as salary by the Government.

227. But since receiving this picture, his salary slowly increased and became many times more than forty.

228. It was an immediate experience of all the people that Baba gave ten times as much as he received – ten times the power and the position.

229. Besides, love towards the spiritual increases on account of faith and devotion. Isn't this something unusual? Baba's skill is wonderful.

230. Later Appasaheb asked for the *vibhuti* that the fakir had given. When he looked it was a small packet, which he opened with love.

231. With the *udi* there were flowers and consecrated rice, which he found in the packet. He had an amulet made and wore it on his arm with great reverence.

232. Later when he took Baba's *darshan*, the hair which Baba gave to him personally was also placed in the amulet most lovingly.

233. How great is Baba's *udi* [13]! Ashes are also the ornament of Shankar. He who applies it on the forehead with devotion, will find all difficulties removed immediately.

234. He who, after his ablutions and bath, applies *udi* regularly and drinks the *tirth* of the washings of Baba's feet, will be purified and benefitted.

235. Besides, the real importance of this *udi* is that he who takes it will have a full life and his sins will be completely destroyed. He will enjoy bliss and contentment always.

236. Such a sweet feast of the nectar of stories has been arranged by Sai because of Appa. We are the uninvited guests there but let us fully enjoy them together with him.

237. The host and the guests, both have the same feast. There is no difference in its taste and sweetness. Be satisfied on partaking this blissful food.

238. Hemad surrenders to Sai. Enough of listening to this, for the present. In the next chapter there will be narration of greater importance of the *udi*.

239. How the application of *udi* and Sai's *darshan* cured tubercular bone-ulcers, guinea worms and bubonic plague – listen to it with full attention.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the thirty-third chapter, of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Power of the *Udi*".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. There is a similar experience of Baba recorded by Hari Sitaram Dixit, thus:- Once Bapusaheb Jog was stung by a scorpion, around about 8 o'clock at night. He went immediately to Maharaj. As he was climbing the steps, Maharaj said: "What is the matter Bapusaheb?" Bapusaheb answered: "Baba I have been stung by a scorpion." Maharaj said: "It will be alright. Go."

Bapusaheb returned from the steps only; and before he left the compound, his pain totally stopped.

Once an astrologer had come to Shirdi who had acquired the power of a demon communicating by whispering in the ears the affairs of people. He went for Maharaj's darshan but his mind was greatly concentrated on making money. He saw no opportunity there to make money, so he took *darshan* and quickly went to Rahata. There, at night, he was bitten by a scorpion. He suffered intense pain. Then, he applied the *udi* given by Maharaj and began chanting Maharaj's name unceasingly. Consequently the pain eased and his faith in Maharaj developed. The next day, the astrologer went to Shirdi again. He stayed there for 15 to 20 days and by Maharaj's grace earned about Rs. 300/- there.

2. Nana Chandorkar.
3. The wife walks behind, as per Hindu tradition.
4. Vishnu.
5. The three – headed Deity who is considered as incarnation of Brahma – Vishnu – Mahesh.
6. Rain water as it falls from the clouds.
7. Sweetmeats.
8. A ceremony for propitiation of the Goddess Durga, by repeating the *stotra* in her praise, nine times.
9. Oblations to the fire for the Deity.
10. Collection of seven hundred verses in praise of Durga in Markandaya Puran.
11. Madhavrao Deshpande.
12. To Lakshmibai (Shinde).
13. Another example of the importance of *udi* had been recorded by Hari Sitaram Dixit. An extract from it is given below:-

"A gentleman named Khimji Lalaji Joshi lived in the Punjabi *chawl* in Parle. His daughter had been ill for a long time. Once, she became serious. At that time, her mother came to our house and took away Maharaj's *udi*. She felt a little better immediately with that *udi*. Later Khimji went to Shirdi with his wife and daughter. The girl was so weak that she was unable to walk. Her arms and legs had become thin as sticks. Someone picked her up and made her sit near Maharaj.

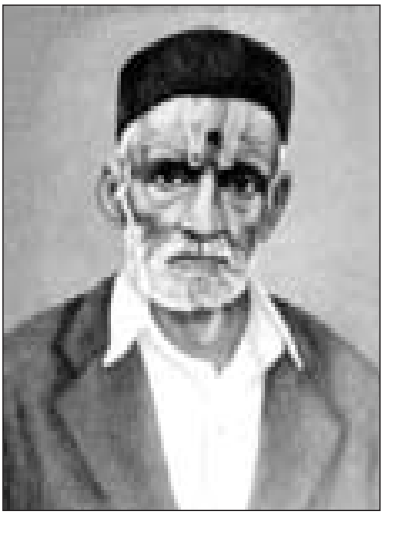
Maharaj applied *udi* to her and blessed her. In a couple of days she was able to walk on her own. She had difficulty in sitting and getting up only. So she complained about it to Maharaj. Maharaj gave her a fruit to eat and from then onwards her difficulty was removed."

One day a friend came to my office and said: "Since the last eight days I am unable to sleep. I am taking the doctor's medicine but it's of no use". I gave him Maharaj's udi and asked him to take it for three days. The very next day he came to my office and said: "I took the *udi* last night and I had very good sleep throughout the night".

Similarly, the son of my friend who lived in Bandra, was not getting sleep for two months. His father took him to Shirdi for Maharaj's *darshan*. That same night he slept and from then onwards he got sleep every night.

Baba giving *Udi* in Dwarkamayi

Appa Kulkarni



M.V. Adkar

34

The Greatness of Udi

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. In the last chapter, I spoke, as truly as I knew, about the greatness of *udi*. In the present chapter, I will continue the same narration describing its characteristics.
2. There is a connection between the stories of the last chapter and this one about the power of the *Udi*. Listeners may hear them with a peaceful mind for their own happiness and understanding.
3. The dreadful disease of tubercular bone-ulcers, which could not be cured by any means, was totally eradicated by the application of *udi*, by Sai's own hands.
4. There are many such stories about *Udi*. I am narrating one as an indication. You will be surprised listening to it, as it has been a well observed experience.
5. A qualified doctor of Malegaon, District Nashik, was unable to cure the illness of his nephew by any medication.
6. He was a doctor and had doctors among friends. They tried all kinds of remedies. Even skilled surgeons were at a loss and were confounded.
7. The disease was tubercular bone-abscess. It was tremendously difficult to bring under control and it resisted all medication.
8. All remedies, indigenous and foreign, were tried. All efforts were made. Even surgery was done. Nothing succeeded.
9. The nephew was young. He was unable to bear the pain. He struggled under extreme pain and the relatives were distressed.
10. When all medical efforts had crossed the limit and yet there was not the slightest improvement, some relations and friends suggested invoking divine help.

11. So the family deity and others were propitiated but none of them seemed to help. Then they learnt that in Shirdi village there was a famous *aulia*.

12. He was the greatest amongst saints at Shirdi – Sai Maharaj, the greatest of *yogis* ! By his mere *darshan* diseases were eradicated. This was what they heard.

13. The desire to have Sai *darshan* arose. The mother and the father decided: "Let us try this remedy, with trust in God.

14. He is said to be a great *aulia*. If he applies *udi* with his own hands incurable diseases are eradicated. What do we lose by taking this experience?

15. Let us go and bow at his feet. Let us try this last remedy. Perhaps it might ward off this problem. It is our last resort".

16. Enough. Later the parents made quick preparations being anxious for Sai's *darshan*. They arrived quickly at Shirdi.

17. They took Baba's *darshan* as soon as they arrived. They bowed and prostrated at his feet. They narrated the sufferings of the boy and stood in front of Baba.

18. Overwhelmed with grief, with folded hands, they surrendered at Sree Sai's feet. With faces showing distress, they beseeched Sai.

19. "This boy is suffering", they said. "We cannot bear to see him tortured but we do not know what more we can do. We see no hope.

20. "Seeing the deterioration of our son, we are greatly wearied i.e. exhausted, Sai *Samartha*. Therefore, place your boon granting hand on his head and relieve his suffering.

21. "Hearing about your greatness, we have come here. We have surrendered to you with full devotion. Bestow his life to us".

22. Then, that Sai, the embodiment of compassion, assured them: "Those who come and resort to this *Masjid* shall never suffer anything in this life.

23. Now, be carefree. Take *udi* and apply it on the abscess. Within four to eight days, he will get relief. Have faith in God.

24. This is not a *Masjid* but *Dwaravati* [1]. He who steps here will get health and happiness, within no time. You also will get this experience.

25. It is impossible that whoever comes here is not relieved. He who climbs the steps of this *Masjid* will accomplish his objective. Know that".

26. Later, on orders from Baba, the patient was made to sit before him. Baba moved his hand on the leg and cast merciful glances at him.
27. This was merely physical suffering. But even suffering which is destined or created by the mind is destroyed from its roots by the *darshan*.
28. Just seeing Sree Sai's face, all troubles cease then and there; and drinking the nectar of his words gives the greatest happiness to a sick person.
29. So be it. They stayed there for four days. There was improvement in the disease and their faith in Sai developed.
30. Thereafter, those three, with Baba's full permission, returned home full of happiness and satisfaction.
31. Was this a small miracle that the tubercular bone-abscess was cured only with *udi* and a merciful glance? This alone is the unparalleled remedy.
32. Thus due to good fortune they had the *darshan* of the great sage, his assurance and beneficial blessings. By these only the disease had been uprooted.
33. So be it. After application of the udi and partaking of it, for some days, the abscess drained away, the wound filled up and that boy regained good health[2].
34. When the uncle heard all this at Malegaon, it aroused a desire to have Sai's *darshan* in him. He thought of fulfilling his wish on his way back to Bombay.
35. But when he left for Bombay, at Malegaon and at Manmad, somebody created doubts in his mind and he abandoned the idea of going to Shirdi.
36. Such is the fate of many a good intention! Evil-minded people put a spoke in the wheel, right at the start. Only those who pay no heed to public opinion achieve happiness in the end.
37. Then setting aside the idea of the saint's *darshan*, he went straight to Bombay; and decided to spend the rest of his holidays at Alibag.
38. After he had decided thus, for three consecutive nights, he heard a voice in his sleep: "Do you still have disbelief in me?"
39. On hearing this voice from heaven, repeatedly, the doctor was bewildered. He decided to go to Shirdi for he felt that the voice was meaningful.
40. But the doctor was treating someone with an infectious fever. So he decided to leave immediately after the patient got better.

41. But the temperature was very high and no medication proved useful. It did not come down at all; so, he could not leave immediately.

42. So he ultimately decided that if the patient improved that day he would leave the next day, without losing a moment, for Shirdi.

43. Within a few hours of making this firm resolution the temperature came down. The doctor's objective could be fulfilled and he left for Shirdi.

44. As determined, he went to Shirdi. He bowed at Baba's feet with full faith. Baba convinced him of his secret experience and made him a firm devotee.

45. Baba placed his hand on the doctor's head with blessings, and gave him *udi-prasad*. Realising the unfathomable greatness of Sai, he was filled with amazement.

46. He stayed there for four days, and returned with a happy frame of mind. Hardly had a fortnight passed that he went to Bijapur on a promotion.

47. It was on account of the tubercular bone – abscess that he had the opportunity of Sai's *darshan*. He developed love for the saint's feet and achieved permanent bliss.

48. Similarly, once Dr. Pillai was in excruciating pain because of guinea-worms. They had increased from one to seven. He was fed up of life.

49. Sai Baba loved him greatly and affectionately called him by the nickname 'Bhau'. He always inquired after his well-being with great love.

50. In the *Masjid*, Bhau's place was near the railing, in the morning and evening. He spent a lot of time with Bhau and they chatted a lot.

51. Bhau was needed when the *chillum* was puffed; Bhau was needed when the *bidi* [3] was smoked; Bhau was needed when passing judgement on certain matters. When he was not near, he was missed.

52. Enough. This was his background. Since the pain on account of the guinea-worms was unbearable, Bhau was confined to the bed being enfeebled. The intensity of the pain was too much to bear.

53. Even in such a pathetic situation, Bhau chanted Sai's name. "Enough of this suffering. Even death is preferable", he cried surrendering to Sai.

54. He sent a message to Baba: "I am weary of bearing this pain. How many abscesses do I have on my body! I do not have the strength to bear this.

55. "Throughout my life I have acted correctly. Why should I have to undergo this painful condition? I have never deviated from the path of righteousness. Why should I be punished and for what sin?

56. "Baba! I can longer bear this pain on account of the guinea-worms, which is similar to death. Instead let me die now. I shall undergo the suffering in my next life.

57. "There is no alternative but to bear the pain. I shall have to take many more births. But that which is destined cannot be avoided. Dull-witted though I am, I realise it.

58. "I will happily take ten more births, in which I shall undergo the fruits of my *karma*. But grant me the boon of ending this present life.

59. "Enough of this life. Release me from this birth. I do not wish to undergo this pain. That is all that I ask for now".

60. Listening to this prayer, the *Siddha-rana* felt compassion; and for Dr. Pillai's satisfaction showered the nectar of mercy. Savour it.

61. Then seeing this utterly painful condition of Dr. Pillai, notice what the devotee's wish-fulfilling tree did to remove it.

62. This message from Dr. Pillai was brought by Dixit. Listening to this news, Baba said: "Go and tell him to be fearless".

63. And the further message he sent: "Why should he be crippled for ten lives? He has to bear it out only for ten days; and we shall both share it.

64. "When I am capable of granting liberation, material desires, or spirituality, are you being brave in asking for something meaningless like death?

65. "Pick him up and bring him here. What has been destined must be borne with equanimity. One should not be confounded like this. Bring him here on somebody's back".

66. So, the doctor was immediately brought to the *Masjid* in such a condition. Taking out the bolster from behind his back, Baba gave it to him to lean on.

67. Placing it on his right, where Fakir Baba used to sit he said: "Lean on it and stay quiet. Do not fret, unnecessarily.

68. "Stretch your legs out comfortably whereby you will be at ease. Whatever is destined has to be borne. That is the only remedy.

69. "Good or bad, pleasure or pain, as per destiny, come either like nectar or poison. Bear in mind that this pair of opposites comes naturally (in the life of a person). Be neither happy nor miserable.

70. "Endure whatever comes. Allah is the Master and Protector. Always meditate upon Him. He takes every care.

71. Surrender at His feet with body, mind, speech and wealth. If one remains constantly thinking of Him, one will realise His functioning".

72. Then Dr. Pillai said that Nanasaheb Chandorkar had tied a bandage over the wounds but he had got no relief.

73. Baba said: "Nana is mad. Remove the bandage, otherwise you will die. Now a crow will come and peck. Then you will get well".

74. Enough. While this conversation was in progress, Abdul[5] came up immediately, to pour oil in the lamps. See what happened all of a sudden.

75. The *Masjid* was as it is, small and there was a large crowd of devotees. In the midst of all that there was the confusion about Pillai. Abdul had no room to put his foot.

76. Abdulla was concentrating on his work and had his attention on the lamps. Thereby, he did not notice Pillai. Something unusual happened!

77. What could Abdulla[6] do? What is destined to happen will happen. Unknowingly his foot fell on the leg which Pillai had stretched out.

Abdul Baba

78. The leg was as it is swollen and Abdulla stepped on it, at that very spot. Then Pillai bawled out loudly, as he was in excruciating pain.

79. He shrieked once in such a way that it pierced the mind. Then, with folded hands, he prayed to Baba for Mercy. Listen to it.

80. The wound burst and the worms began to ooze out. Pillai was very restless. He was crying out loudly and singing, alternately:-

"O Karim! Have mercy on my pitiable state!

Thou art called Merciful and Kind!

Thou art Emperor of both the worlds!

The world is thy splendour.

This world is going to be destroyed.

But Your Grandeur will be eternal.

You are always the Saviour of the Devotees".

81. The pain was intermittent. He was in agony and lay down helplessly. Everyone felt that this was Sai Baba's sport.

82. Baba said : "Look at Bhau. He seems to be better. He is singing now". Pillai then asked him: "Is that crow still going to peck at me?"

83. Then, Baba said: "Go and rest in the *wada* now. Now the crow will not come again to peck at you.

84. "Did he not already come? He is the same one who trod on your leg. He is the crow who pecked and ran away. He squeezed out the worms".

85. What crow! It had only been a figure of speech! Whatever had to happen was got done in front of all. He fulfilled the prediction.

86. These were not ordinary words; but destiny. Even the deeds done in previous births will have no effect. Within a short time Bhau began to feel better.

87. And as the tenth day dawned, the disease was totally cured only by application of *udi* and partaking of it. This was the only medication.

88. All the seven worms came out alive, from the wound. They were thin and long. The excruciating pain eased. There was an end to the misery.

89. Experiencing this miracle, Pillai was overwhelmed, and tears of affection flowed from his eyes by this fine deed of Baba.

90. Pillai embraced Baba's feet. He was choked with emotion but could not utter a single word.

91. After narrating one more experience, we shall conclude the description of the greatness of udi. One's experience matches one's devotion. That, in fact, is the sum and substance of this book.

92. The story is about Bapaji, the youngest brother of Madhavrao and how he achieved his well-being with *udi*, when he was in difficulty.

93. How much should I describe the marvels and the power of this udi! *Udi* is the medicine par excellence for plague and other diseases.

94. While living at Savul Vihir, a place near Shirdi, Bapaji's wife had fever and bubos developed in her groins. He felt anxious.

95. Seeing his wife in great pain at the fearsome night time, Bapaji lost all fortitude and courage.

96. During the night itself, he ran to Shirdi and arrived shaken and trembling. He told the full details to his brother.

97. He said : "She has developed two bubos and is greatly troubled by the high fever. Come and see for yourself. I do not think all is well".

98. When Bapaji narrated this pitiful state, Madhavrao was shocked and terror – stricken. He was at his wit's end.

99. Madhavrao, though normally a balanced person, was shocked to hear about the bubos. It is well-known that bubonic plague could lead to a quick death.

100. Whatever the situation, good or bad, or any work, auspicious or inauspicious, it was the tradition in Shirdi to consult Sai.
101. Then whatever he said was followed meticulously. He alone removed the problems of the devotees. How many such experiences can I describe?
102. So, as per this routine, Madhavrao also thought of adopting this means. He went to Baba, greeted him with reverence and prostrated before him.
103. He said: "Hail, hail Sainath! Have mercy on us, the helpless ones. Now, what is this problem that has arisen, causing unnecessary anxiety!
104. "Who else can we implore besides you? Take away this girl's agony and give your blessings.
105. "Remove this difficulty. Who else will care for us? Bring this terrible fever down. Be true to your creed of protection".
106. He also asked permission to leave, when Baba said to him: "Do not go so late in the night. Send *udi* to her.
107. "Why care for the fever and the bubos? God is our father. She will be alright easily. Everything will be safe and without any problems.
108. "Early in the morning you go to Savul Vihir and return. Do not be in a hurry to go now. Stay here calmly.
109. "Go tomorrow only. There is no need to be restless. When *udi* is applied and partaken with faith, why should one be frightened?"
110. Hearing this, Bapaji was frightened. He was greatly disappointed. Madhavrao knew the antidote of medicinal plants for this disease; but his knowledge would be of no use now.
111. Madhavrao knew fully well that without Sai's grace no medicine would be effective. This was a secret and an indication.
112. So bowing to Baba's will, Madhavrao sent the *udi* and remained calm and quiet. Bapaji returned disappointed.
113. When the *udi* was mixed in water and given to drink, and also applied to the body, she profusely perspired and fell asleep.
114. By sunrise, the wife felt quite well. Gone was the fever and also the poisonous bubos! Bapaji was surprised.
115. At Shirdi, as soon as Madhavrao awoke and finished his ablutions, he came to the *Masjid* for *darshan* on his way to Savul Vihir.
116. He took Baba's *darshan* and prostrated at his feet. As soon as he got the *udi* and blessings, he left from there.
117. As he was descending the steps of the *Masjid*, he heard Baba

command him: "Shama, return immediately. There will be no cause to delay".

118. On the way, he worried: 'Must my sister-in-law be in agony? How will she be bearing the sensation of the two bubos? She must be lying in agony.'

119. Failing to understand the meaning of Baba's words: "Return immediately", Shama was worried even more and walked fast on the way.

120. Until he reached Savul Vihir, he had no patience. But when he stepped across the threshold he witnessed a miracle.

121. One who had fever on account of plague, the previous night, was making tea before the fireplace. Madhavrao was surprised to see the change in her condition.

122. Then he asked Bapaji : "How is it that she is busy with her normal routine?" Bapaji replied: "This is the miracle due to Baba's *Udi* certainly".

123. He added : "As soon as I came, I gave her *udi* to drink and applied it, massaging it all over the body. She immediately profusely perspired and slept comfortably.

124. Then, this morning at sunrise, she got up hale and hearty free of bubos and fever. All this is Sai's doings!"

125. When Shama saw this state of affairs, he immediately recalled Sai's words: "Return immediately." He understood the meaning and was amazed.

126. The problem had ended even before his arrival. Madhavrao had a cup of tea and returned. He went straight to the *Masjid* and bowed at Baba's feet.

127. He said: "O Deva, what is this sport? Sitting here, you raise a turmoil in our minds. A storm is raised and later you alone calm it down".

128. Baba replied to him: "Observe that the ways of fate are difficult to understand. I do nothing nor make others do anything. Yet I am held responsible for all that happens.

129. "I am just a witness to the deeds that happen on account of fate. The Eternal Lord is the doer and the mover. He alone is the Compassionate One.

130. "I am neither God nor the Almighty. I am not the Lord nor the Supreme Spirit. I only remember the Lord and remind people of the existence of the Supreme Lord. I am just a poor servant of Allah.

131. "He who abandons all pride, is ever grateful to Him, and places all his burden on Him, will achieve his objective".

132. Listen to an important and similar experience of an Irani gentleman. His young daughter used to lose her speech hour on the hour.

133. Every hour she got convulsions. Her body arched like a bow and she fell down at the very spot. She became unconscious and seemed as if she would die. No remedy was effective.

134. Later, a friend of his described to him the importance of the *udi* and told him that there was no other, unbelievable and surefire remedy than that.

135. "Go to Parle without any delay and ask Dixit for the *udi*, of which he has a store. He will give it with great pleasure.

136. "Then, everyday if you give this *udi*, remembering Sai with full faith, to drink to her, this convulsion will be cured and she will be well and happy".

137. Hearing this, then this Irani gentleman got *udi* from Dixit, and gave it regularly to his daughter to drink; and she got cured.

138. Whereas she used to have this problem every hour, she improved right away on taking the *udi*, as the frequency of the fits decreased from one hour to seven hours.

139. At first the frequency decreased from one hour to seven hours. And, after some time had passed, the fits stopped altogether[7].

140. An old gentleman lived in a village near Harda. He was distressed on account of kidney-stone and suffered much from it.

141. There was no cure for it other than surgery. Therefore, he was told to find some skilful surgeon.

142. The patient was extremely worried and could not think what to do. His body was very thin and weak and he seemed to be at death's door-step. He was unable to bear the tremendous pain.

143. To undergo an operation, a patient needs courage and this he lacked. But, by good luck his adversity ended. You will be surprised to hear it.

144. When this was the situation, the Inamdar of the town who was a great devotee of Sai Baba, was known to have come to the village, at that time.

145. Everyone knew that he always kept with him Baba's *vibhuti*. The relatives of the patient came to him and requested him for some *udi*.

146. The Inamdar gave the *udi*. The son gave it to the father, mixed in water. Hardly had five minutes passed, when a miracle happened.

147. When the *udi prasad* was assimilated in the body, the kidney stone was pushed out from the kidney and was flushed out with the urine. He felt immediate relief.
148. The wife of a gentleman from Bombay, by caste a Kayasth Prabhu, always had difficulty at the time of delivery.
149. Then, no matter what was tried, nothing was efficacious. The lady felt as if she was dying. And the poor gentleman was distressed.
150. Shri Ram Maruti was a well-known person, who was a devotee of Sai. After consulting him, this gentleman decided to leave for Shirdi.
151. As the time of delivery neared, they both were terribly distressed; but after they decided to go to Shirdi they felt that they would have nothing to fear.
152. 'Whatever has to happen, let it happen at least near Baba' – firmly deciding thus, they came and lived in Shirdi.
153. In this way both of them lived in Shirdi for months together. Both were happy performing *puja* and staying in the company of Sai.
154. After some time had thus passed, the time for the delivery neared. They became extremely apprehensive as to how the difficulty would be overcome.
155. Finally, the day of the delivery arrived and the passage from the womb was obstructed. Everyone became worried?
156. The lady was in severe pain; and was unable to think of what to do. She was chanting Baba's name, for who else can have mercy.
157. The neighbouring ladies came in haste. Praying to Baba fervently, one of them poured water in a glass, mixed *udi* and gave her to drink.
158. Hardly had five minutes passed when the lady delivered. The child was stillborn, having died in the womb itself.
159. That was the fate of the child. She would conceive again, later. But the lady felt relieved of her fears and was in a happy state.
160. She delivered without much trouble. She was freed from any danger to her life. The time for anxiety was averted. She remained indebted to Baba for life.
161. The next chapter is even more interesting and the listeners eagerness will be satisfied. The habit of criticising will disappear as devotion develops.
162. "We worship the formless. We will not give *dakshina*. We will not bow down. We will come for *darshan* only on these conditions".
163. Even those with such firm resolution, when they saw Sai's feet,

prostrated themselves with eight-fold obeisance and tendered *dakshina*. What a miracle is this!

164. The incomparable greatness of *udi*; the loving devotion of Nevaskar and how he maintained the righteous behaviour of a householder by offering milk to a poisonous snake – all this will be narrated.

165. Listening to such excellent stories will arouse loving devotion. The miseries of this worldly existence will subside. Is there greater bliss than this?

166. Therefore, Hemad prays at Sai's feet to arouse love in the listeners and to get involved in his stories.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the thirty-fourth chapter of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Greatness of *Udi*".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Lord Krishna's Dwarka.
2. In the village of Turambhe, near Bellpur, in Thane District, a lady by the name of Shantabai had a tubercular bone abscess on the thumb of her left hand. She suffered from it for seven years. One night, Maharaj told her in a dream : "You apply 'dikemali" (medicinal plant with strong smelling resin). When the lady woke up, she felt very happy. She applied 'dikemali' to the abscess and it got better. Then she wrote a post–card, with all this information, to Maharaj. That card bears the date 1st September 1918.
3. Hand rolled tobacco leaf indigenous cigarette.
4. One who has acquired all the eight *Siddhis*.
5. Baba's devotee who cleaned the lamps and lighted them in the *Masjid*.
6. Abdulbhai was originally a resident of Nanded. But nine or ten years before Maharaj's *Samadhi* he had come to Shirdi to serve him and stayed there. Even after the *Samadhi*, he took no remuneration and continued to serve getting only clothes and food in return. When Maharaj was in body he had a big load of work and he did it with great love. Earlier he stayed in the *Chavadi* ; and thereafter, near the *Dwarakamai*. Even at night, instead of resting, he spent a lot of time reciting the Koran. At home, he had his mother, wife and son; but leaving them all he was living in Shirdi. His mother and son came to Shirdi sometimes. His wife had also come once but he had no attachment for any of them. His mother was worried about the marriage of his son and she tried to arrange it with one party. But she was bluntly told that as Abdulbhai had become a fakir, they did not wish to give their daughter in marriage into that family. Consequently, the mother came to Shirdi and complained to Maharaj. Maharaj said: "Be patient and don't be worried. The boy will get a good wife; and the marriage will be fixed by itself." Of course, everything happened as Maharaj had said. Once Abdulbhai's mother and son had gone to some village.

They met a gentleman there and he insisted on offering his daughter to them. Some people told him that the boy's father had become a fakir, whereupon he replied: "Even if I become a fakir, there is no problem. I will give my daughter in marriage only to this boy." Accordingly, the marriage was celebrated immediately. This gentleman had an elder daughter of a marriageable age. Her marriage had been already fixed, but there was some time before the marriage was to take place. Yet, without a delay, he got his younger daughter married first, to Abdulbhai's son.

7. There are many such experiences of this *udi*. A gentleman by the name of Narayan Gopinath Dighe used to live in Bombay. He developed a tumor in his stomach. It was like a hard stone and he began suffering a lot, due to it. He consulted one or two famous doctors of Bombay, but it was of no use. Later, someone advised him to go to Maharaj. Of course, it was not possible for him to go in his condition. He said that if with the blessings of Maharaj, this tumor would burst and be excreted, he would feel better and then be able to go to Maharaj. So that person gave Maharaj's *udi* to him. He began to be partake of it and the very next day the tumor burst and the internal pus began to be excreted. After a few more days, he felt better. Then, as soon as possible, he went for Maharaj's *darshan*.

Dr. Pillay

35

The Erasure of Doubts and Misapprehensions and the Embellishment of Vibhuti

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Previously, in the last chapter, I had indicated the stories I would narrate. I will now enlarge upon them. Listen to them with patience.
2. Pride of sectarianism is the greatest obstacle on the path of spirituality. There is no other danger greater than this pride.
3. "We are the worshippers of the formless. A deity with form creates confusion in the mind of a person. *Sadhus* and saints are human beings only. Why should we bow to them?
4. "We should not prostrate ourselves before them. We should not offer them *dakshina* or alms. This would be a mockery of devotion".
5. Many people spread numerous stories about Shirdi expressing different views. We cannot believe all of them.
6. Some said that when they went for *darshan,* Sai Baba asked for *dakshina*. If a *sadhu* amasses wealth, his saintly nature loses its quality.
7. Some said that blind faith is not good. One should decide after getting a specific experience, as to how one should behave.
8. "We will not offer *dakshina*. One who has desire to get money, cannot be considered to be a holy person, and is not worthy of respect.
9. "But we will go to Shirdi and return after meeting him. We will not bow at his feet nor will we offer *dakshina*".
10. All those who left their homes with these evil thoughts and firmly decided to stick to their resolutions, ultimately even they surrendered to Sai on taking *darshan*.

11. Whoever came to see Sai stayed on with him and never again turned his back, getting attached at Sai's feet.
12. Such a person also bowed at his feet in the same way as those who have surrendered to him, with full faith and humility, forgetting his early resolution.
13. Where pride on account of sectarianism is discarded, there will be immense happiness. Such is this thirty-fifth chapter, which the listeners should hear with respect.
14. Similarly there is a suggestion about the importance of *udi*; and the experience of Bala Nevaskar with a snake and how he gave it loving treatment, considering it to be none else but Sai.
15. Listeners, have mercy on me. I am only an obedient servant, who knows to obey the instructions respectfully. In doing this, *Satcharita* has come into being, word for word.
16. As I gaze at his feet, waves of stanzas flow into my mind with which I fill the earthen pot of this holy biography, on and oft.
17. We are the young ones of the mother tortoise who have been nurtured merely by the glance, and never left hungry or thirsty but always kept contented.
18. Basking in the happiness of the glance, we need no food or water. The glance satisfies hunger and thirst. How can I describe that marvel!
19. Sairaya, the ocean of mercy, is the sole object of our sight. That which is seen, one that sees and the act of seeing – all these three are completely eliminated.
20. Similarly, it is only the light of Sai which we feel on our skin and to our touch; and Sai's abode is in our sense of smell.
21. Or, when one listens to any word, Sai's image is immediately evoked. That which is listened to, the listener and the act of listening – all these three are completely eliminated.
22. Or, when the tongue savours any flavour, it is blended with Sai. Where then is the tongue, the flavour or the experience of the flavour? This is a pitiful three-fold enigma.
23. If this is the state of all the senses and they serve only Sai, all the bad actions will be destroyed and will be freed from the fruits of action.
24. Enough. Now this book is getting lengthened on account of love for Sai – whereby we are digressing. Let us recall the previous narration and continue with our story.

25. A person, who did not believe in worshipping the form and was a staunch believer in the formless, desired to go to Shirdi out of sheer curiousity.

26. He said: "After coming to Shirdi, I will only take the *sadhu*'s darshan. I will never bow or offer *dakshina*.

27. "If you accept these two conditions, then I will come with you to Shirdi". When his friend agreed, he got ready to leave, happily, with his friend.

28. Kaka Mahajani was his friend, who had a pure devotion towards the saints. Yet he had a friend, who was subject to doubts and scepticism.

29. Both left Bombay on a Saturday night and arrived at Shirdi on Sunday morning.

30. Both went to the *Masjid* for taking Sai's *darshan*. Listen peacefully to what happeened at that time.

31. Looking at his friend from a distance, as they were climbing the steps, Baba spoke in a sweet voice: "Oh, you have come! Welcome!"

32. Hearing these loving words, the friend realised that the manner of intonation of the words was like his father's of whom he was reminded.

33. "Oh, you have come! Welcome!" when Kaka's friend heard these words and the tone in which Baba spoke them, he was surprised.

34. Hearing the enticing tone and manner of speech he was reminded of his late father. This was completely his manner of speaking! He felt it was the exact remembrance.

35. How enticing was the power of these words! Kaka's friend was amazed, and said to himself: "These are my father's words definitely. The tone is certainly recognisable".

36. Hearing these words, as if spoken by his father, the friend was overcome with emotion. He bowed his head at Baba's feet, forgetting his earlier resolution.

37. Later, Baba asked for *dakshina* but only from Kaka, which Kaka gave. They returned to their lodging and went again to the *Masjid* in the afternoon.

38. They went there together. As both had to return to Bombay, Kaka asked for permission, whereupon Baba asked for *dakshina*.

39. And that too only from Kaka. He said: "Give me seventeen rupees", and asked for nothing from the friend. So he was internally disturbed.

40. Then he asked Kaka softly, "Why does he ask for *dakshina* only

from you? In the morning too, he asked you only; and now also, he is asking from you only.

41. Though I am with you, why does he omit me in respect of the *dakshina* ?" Kaka whispered the reply: "Ask this of Baba only".

42. At that moment Baba spoke to Kaka: "What is he saying to you?" Then the friend himself spoke and asked Baba : "May I give you *dakshina* ?"

43. Then Baba replied : "You had no intention to give, so I did not ask it of you. If you desire to give, then do give".

44. That friend had ridiculed the devotees who gave *dakshina* when Baba asked. Therefore, Kaka was surprised that the same person was offering to give, unasked.

45. As soon as Baba said "give if you so desire", his friend hurriedly paid up seventeen rupees and placed them at his feet, unasked.

46. Then Baba said to him: "Where is the hurry? Sit for a moment". He then gave him valuable instruction, to remove the difference between 'you and me'.

47. "Pull down the oil-monger's wall[1] between us, totally, so that the road is widened to enable us to meet each other".

48. Then, they were given permission to leave. Seeing the cloudy sky, Madhavrao feared that rain would make them wet.

49. Baba replied to him: "Let them go, free of worry. They need not fear rain at all, on their way".

50. Bowing at Sai's feet both of them took the carriage. There was a heavy fog and lightning. The Godavari was in spate.

51. The sky roared with thunder. Though they had to take a ferry, Kaka had full faith, having been assured by Baba.

52. But his friend was worried as to how the journey would be safe. He regretted that they left and felt that there would be trouble on the way.

53. Enough. They went forward safely. They entered the train and thereafter it began to pour. They reached Bombay without any fear.

54. When he came home and opened the doors and windows, one sparrow which was caught inside flew out. However, he found two dead.

55. He felt very sad to see this sight. "O Lord, they have lost their lives due to thirst and starvation!

56. "When I left for Shirdi, if I had left the windows open, they would not have died. The poor creatures died because of me.

57. "It is as if Baba was worried about the one who flew away now. Therefore, he happily granted his permission to leave to-day itself.

58. "Otherwise it would have died also. How could it have survived without food? It remained safe while the other two met their lot as per their destiny".

59. Another experience of his is also worth listening to. He used to suffer from pain in the heel of one of his feet, since months.

60. Before going to Shirdi, he had suffered from this trouble for many months. After he returned from there, he was relieved from pain and it disappeared in a very short time.

61. Similarly there is another story where a person who goes in search of a saint and has to put his head down in obeisance at the feet, though he had no intention to do so. Listen to it.

62. Also, when one does not wish to give *dakshina* because one is caught in the illusion of worldly objects, how one ends up giving *dakshina* despite one's firm resolve.

63. Dharamsi Jethabhai Thakkar, a solicitor from Bombay wished to meet Sai because of some earlier merits.

64. He was the employer of Mahajani. Both of them were on intimate terms. He felt like going to Shirdi and personally meeting him.

65. Kaka (Mahajani) was the Manager of Thakkarji's firm. Taking advantage of holidays, on and oft, Kaka used to get ready to go to Shirdi.

Kaka Mahajani

66. Did Kaka return on time? He stayed sometimes at Shirdi for eight days at a time and explained that he did not receive Sai's permission to return. Is this a way to work?

67. 'What kind of a saint is he? I do not approve of this kind of profession of saintliness.' The Sheth left during the Holi holidays to find out who this Sai was!

68. His ego and his pride in his profession and position were enormous. 'After all saints are human beings! Why should one bow to them?' This is what he felt.

69. *Shastris* and *Pandits* got exhausted and accepted defeat before Sai's authority. Therefore, what chance did poor Dharamsi have there! And how far could he stick to his resolution?

70. 'But it is not good to have blind faith; let me go and ascertain for myself.' With this determination, he made preparations to go to Shirdi.

71. Dharamsi also laid down conditions, described in the foregoing verses, as the other friend of Kaka. He left along with Kaka and told him:
72. "On this trip it will not do for you to go to Shirdi and stay there. You must return with me. Know that for sure".
73. Then Kaka replied: "This is not in our hands". Therefore, Dharamsi took one more person with him, to go on the way.
74. In case Kaka did not return, it would be difficult for him not to have a companion so he took a third person and all three of them left for Shirdi.
75. In the world, there are so many kinds of persons who are obliging to the devotees. Baba pulls them (to Shirdi) to remove their doubts.
76. And when they returned they narrated their experiences to others. They even got them written down by some one else, so that the people could take to the true path.
77. In short, whoever went to Shirdi were filled with happiness by the *darshan*. Irrespective of their initial state of mind, they had supreme bliss in the end.
78. They said that they had a love for curiosity and, therefore, went on their own there. But in fact, the position was different. They served Baba's purpose.
79. Baba himself gives them the inspiration to step out. He puts them on the spiritual path by making them aware of their natural instincts.
80. Who knows his skills and ways? If one tries, it would be inviting misfortune. So leaving aside your ego, prostrate at his feet and enjoy the feast of happiness.
81. It is not good to go empty handed to a temple, brahmin or Guru. Therefore, Kaka bought two seers of grapes on the way.
82. He had wanted to buy the seedless variety of grapes but he could only get ones with seeds at that time. So Kaka bought those.
83. So be it. Chatting away happily, the trio arrived in Shirdi. All the three together went to the *Masjid* for Baba's *darshan*.
84. The devotee, Babasaheb Tarkhad, was also present there. Listen to what Sheth Dharamsi asked him out of curiosity.
85. "What is here? Why do you come?" Tarkhad answered: "For *darshan*". Sheth said: "I have heard that miracles take place here".
86. Then Tarkhad replied to him: "Well, this is not my feeling. But the earnest intentions of the devotees are satisfied here".
87. Kaka placed his head on Baba's feet and offered the grapes to Baba. The distribution began, as there was a large congregation.

88. Then, together with the others, Baba gave some to Dharamsi also. But he did not like this variety. He loved the seedless ones.

89. He had an aversion to this kind of grapes. Thus, an obstacle arose right at the beginning. He did not feel like eating them. But to refuse them was also difficult.

90. Moreover, the doctor had prohibited him from eating them without washing them first. He did not feel it proper for himself alone to wash them. Innumerable doubts arose.

91. Finally, he put them as they were in the mouth and after munching on them slowly, separated the seeds and put them in his pocket. This was the holy abode of a saint and he could not defile it.

92. Then the Sheth thought: 'Being a saint, how does he not know that I dislike these grapes? Why has he forcibly given them to me?'

93. No sooner than these thoughts had arisen, Baba gave him more of these. Knowing that they were the variety with seeds, he held them in his hand only and did not put them in the mouth.

94. It is true that he did not like grapes with seeds. But Baba had given them in his hands. Sheth Dharamsi was disturbed and did not know what to do.

95. He did not feel like putting them in his mouth, therefore, he carefully held them in his fist. Then Baba said : "Go on, eat them". The Sheth obeyed his instructions.

96. Dharamsi put them in his mouth when Baba said: "Eat them" But he found all of them seedless. He was greatly wonderstruck.

97. When he found them all seedless, Dharamsi being perplexed, thought to himself: 'Strange powers! What is impossible for these saints!

98. "Knowing my intentions and the grapes being with seeds and unwashed, whichever ones Sai gave me, they were seedless and good for me.'

99. He was amazed. He forgot his doubts. His pride dissolved. He developed great love for the saint.

100. His earlier resolutions disappeared. Love for Sai arose in his heart. The eagerness with which he came to Shirdi was vindicated, without a doubt.

101. Baba Tarkhad was also there, sitting near Baba. Baba Sai gave him some grapes from the same lot.

102. Then Dharamsi asked him "what kind of grapes did you get?" and when Tarkhad replied that they were with seeds, he was very much surprised.

103. By this, he believed that he was a saint. But he got an idea to get a confirmation. He thought 'If you are a real saint, then this time let the distribution begin with Kaka'.

104. Baba was distributing to many. But when this thought occurred to the Shethji, Baba started to distribute from Kaka. The Sheth was greatly amazed.

105. Such indications of saintliness, such powers to read the mind, were sufficient for Dharamsi's mind, to accept Sai as a saint.

106. Madhavrao who was there, then told Baba: "This is Kaka's master", by way of an explanation and introduction.

107. "How could he be Kaka's Master? He has another Master", was Baba's clear reply. Kaka appreciated this reply.

108. And, another surprise! There was a cook, by the name of Appa, who was standing near the *dhuni* . Baba gave him the credit.

109. He said : "This Shethji has not taken the trouble to come here for me! His love for Appa overflowed[2]. Therefore, he has come to Shirdi".

110. This way the conversation ended. Dharamsi fogot his resolution. On his own, he fell at Baba's feet. Then he returned to the *wada*.

111. So be it. The noon *arati* was over. They prepared for their departure. The time came for taking Baba's permission. So the group went back to the *Masjid*.

112. Then Dharamsi said to Kaka: "I will not ask for permission. You ask for it, as you need it". Then Madhavrao remarked.

113. "Kaka cannot be sure of his departure. Unless a week is over, he will not be given permission. Why don't you ask youself?"

114. Afterwards when the three of them reached and sat down, Madhavrao asked for permission on their behalf. Baba began relating a story. Listen to it with a calm mind.

115. "There was a fickle-minded man. He was prosperous. He was free from physical and mental afflictions. But he took on him needless anxieties.

116. "He carried upon himself unnecessary burdens. He wandered hither and thither, and had no peace of mind. Sometimes he dropped the burdens and at other times carried them again. His mind knew no steadiness.

117. "Seeing his state, I took pity on him and said: 'Keep your faith in any one place.

118. "Why do you unnecessarily roam like this? Stick quietly to one place".

This story touched a sore point of Dharamsi. He realised that this was an indication to him only.

119. Inspite of having adequate wealth and prosperity, and without having the slightest of reason, Dharamsi was always worried and felt disturbed unnecessarily.

120. He had enough money and honour, but he was not contented. He was burdened with deep, imaginary problems and always got lost in them.

121. Hearing this story from Sai, the Shethji was extremely surprised. 'This is the state of my mind', he thought and listened with great respect.

122. It was a chance in a million for Kaka to get permission to leave early, but when he got that also, Dharamsi was very contented.

123. It was Dharamsi's deep desire that Kaka should leave with him. This also was fulfilled by Baba, by giving his consent to leave.

124. How did Baba come to know that this was also one of the conditions of Shethji? Dharamsi strangely accepted it that this was also one of the characteristics of saintliness.

125. All doubts were removed, and it was clear that Sai was a saint. Baba gave experiences, which depended upon each one's thoughts.

126. Whatever path one desires to take, he is helped on that very path. Sai is aware of the qualifications and worth of one and accordingly one attains spiritual progress.

127. Irrespective of whether a devotee is full of faith or mocking, Sai is equally merciful to both. This loving Mother did not differentiate between the two.

128. Then, when both of them were about to leave, Baba asked for fifteen rupees as *dakshina* from Kaka and on his own said to Kaka :

129. "If anyone has given me one rupee as *dakshina*, I have to give ten times more in return, accurately.

130. "I never take anything from anyone gratis. I do not ask all and sundry. I only take *dakshina* from those to whom the Fakir points out.

131. "The Fakir asks from only those to whom He is indebted. The giver sows the seeds, by giving, and later reaps the harvest.

132. "Wealth should be used only for righteous purposes. If wealth is so spent then only it is beneficial. By righteousness, true knowledge is attained.

133. "This wealth which has been accumulated by hard labour is

sometimes believed to be utilised only for one's own pleasures. Instead of using this wealth for righteous purposes, it is wasted.

134. "One who amasses wealth to the tune of crores of rupees, by saving pie after pie, but never spends that wealth for the fulfilment of sensual pleasures, such a person is happy".

135. Everyone is fully aware of the *shruti* which says that "Unless one gives, one does not receive". Unless you have given earlier you do not get it now. Therefore, Baba asked for *dakshina*.

136. During Ram Avatar, Raghunandan gave innumerable idols of women in gold to gain sixteen thousand wives in the Krishna Avatar.

137. A devotee is truly impoverished who does not have devotion, knowledge and non-attachment. Such a person is first taught and established in non-attachment, and then given devotion and knowledge.

138. When Baba asks for *dakshina* it is the sign of non-attachment. Later on by placing the devotee on the path of devotion, makes him reach excellence in attainment of knowledge.

139. "What do I do after all? Take one and give ten-fold. Step by step I put one on the path of knowledge". Baba said. This created an intense desire in Dharamsi.

140. On his own, he placed fifteen rupees in Baba's hands, totally forgetting his earlier resolve. The whole incident was unparalleled.

141. He felt that he had earlier been unnecessarily boastful. He felt glad that he had come personally so that he learnt what saints are like and with experience got attached to him.

142. 'If I had not made those resolutions, I would not have come to pay respect. That too, I came on my own! The saints' ways are inexplicable!

143. 'How can anything be impossible for him who has *Allah-Malik* forever on his tongue! I was anxious to witness a miracle of the saint.

144. 'My resolutions were in vain. I prostrated before a human being and also gave him *dakshina* unasked, on my own.

145. 'In vain was my pride. On my own, I placed my head at Sai's feet with devotion. What more could be amazing!'

146. How can I describe this skill of Sai! Though he was instrumental in doing all this, he outwardly remained uninvolved. What can be more surprising than this?

147. Whether anyone bowed to him or not, or whether anyone gave him *dakshina* or not, Sai, the Cloud of Mercy, and the source of happiness, never treated anyone scornfully.

148. He felt no pleasure because he was worshipped; and no pain because he was ridiculed. Where there is no pleasure, there is no pain. His state was beyond duality.
149. Whatever be anyone's intentions, when once granted *darshan*, he made the person develop devotion at his feet. Such was the marvellous power of Sai!
150. Enough. Later after receiving *udi prasad* and blessings, they returned without any doubts. Such was Sai's fame!
151. To depart from Shirdi it was necessary to have Baba's permission. To disobey was to invite trouble.
152. One felt repentant and humiliated if one left on one's own volition. There would be dreadful obstacles on the way which would be difficult to overcome.
153. This was what was said about the departure from Shirdi. This was the same position with me. "None can come here unless I bring him", was what Baba said.
154. "Unless I so desire who can cross his threshold? Who will get *darshan* by his own volition or come to Shirdi?"
155. We can come for *darshan* only when mercy arises in the heart of Sai *Samartha*, the embodiment of mercy, in whose hands rest our lives.
156. If Sai was not inclined, about the coming and the going, he did not grant permission nor gave *udi*.
157. If one went to ask for permission, after bowing down, and was given blessings with the *udi*, it signified permission to leave.
158. Now I shall narrate to the listeners a novel experience about the *udi*. Then about the power of devotion of Nevaskar because of the grace of Sai, the Eminent One.
159. A gentleman from Bandra, Prabhu Kayasth by caste, suffered from insomnia inspite of best of efforts.
160. The moment he was about to get sleep, within no time his departed father came in his dreams and awakened him, every time.
161. Making a reference to whatever good or bad incidents that might have happened in earlier life, and to the secret evil and far-fetched thoughts, he used abusive language and bombarded him with that.
162. Night after night, the same thing happened. Night after night, he lost his sleep. He was depressed. He could not avoid the suffering that was pursuing him.
163. The gentleman was fed up. He could think of no remedy. He consulted a Sai devotee, if there was any relief.

164. "We do not know any other remedy. Sai Maharaj is the Eminent One. If you have the same faith, the *udi* will show its power," he said.
165. He implicitly followed the instructions that he was given and experienced the power of the *udi* accordingly. He no longer had bad dreams.
166. That friend was a devotee of Sai *Samartha* due to the merits of his past deeds. After narrating to him the strange powers of *udi*, he gave him a little of it.
167. He told him: "When you go to sleep, apply a little on the forehead and put a small packet under pillow. Think of Sree Sai.
168. Have faith. Then experience this *udi's* power. It will immediately put an end to your trouble. This is the merit of *Udi* ".
169. After he did as he was instructed, he got deep sleep that night. There was not a trace of that bad dream. The gentleman was very delighted.
170. Then how could that joy of his be described! He kept the packet of *udi* under his pillow always and remembered Sai daily.
171. Later he bought a picture of Baba and put it on the wall at the head of his bed, and garlanded it every Thursday. He respectfully worshipped it.
172. He began to take *darshan* of the picture; offered garlands on Thursdays, remembered Sai daily. His troubles ceased altogether.
173. He continued to have faith and carried out his practices strictly. He had abiding welfare. He totally forgot his earlier troubles of insomnia and bad dreams.
174. This is one example of the effectiveness of *udi*. I will narrate another unique experience. If the *udi* is used for any kind of problem, it will bring unalloyed well-being.
175. Balaji Patil Nevaskar was a great devotee. He rendered excellent and disinterested service and wore away his body for Baba.
176. Nevaskar's regular task was to sweep all the passages and streets in Shirdi through which Baba passed in his daily routine, including the round to the Lendi.
177. The tradition of the service was continued after him by Radhakrishnabai[3]. She was excellent in this work.
178. By caste a Brahmin, respected by all, she never in her innocent heart had the wicked thought that this was a lowly task.
179. Getting up early in the morning, taking the broom in her hand, she would sweep all the paths used by Baba. Blessed was her service!

180. Her work was clean and quick. Who else would be able to compete with her? After some time, Abdul[4] came forward.

181. That Patil (Nevaskar) was very fortunate. Though he lived in the world, he was not attached to it. How unselfish he was! Listen to that part of the story.

182. After harvesting, he brought all the grain to the *Masjid* and making a pile of it in the open space, he offered it at Baba's feet.

183. Firmly believing that Baba was the owner of everything, he lived on whatever Baba gave to him out of it, taking that much only back home.

184. Bala drank only the water that came from the channel after Maharaj had his bath or washed his hands and feet.

185. He continued these practices till his death. Even to-day, his loving son carries on with the same, to some extent.

186. He too sent the grains regularly. From that Maharaj had *jowar* [5] *bhakri*, four times a day, until his *Mahanirvan*.

187. Enough. Observe what happened once. It was Bala's death anniversary. Food was cooked and ready; and the servants began to serve it.

188. The food was cooked at home on the approximate basis of the expected guests. But when serving the food, it was estimated that the people were thrice the number expected.

189. Mrs. Nevaskar[6] was worried. She began to whisper to her mother-in-law: "We are going to be disgraced to-day. How could it be avoided?"

190. The mother-in-law had great faith. "When Sai *Samartha* is our support, why should we worry? You remain calm," she said.

191. After the mother-in-law assured her thus, she took a handful of *udi* and put a little in each of the food containers and then covered the containers with cloth.

192. She said: "You go and distribute without care. Remove the cloth covering partially only to enable you to distribute. Draw the cloth over it again, as earlier. Remember to do this without fail.

193. This is food from Sai's home. Not even a grain is ours. He alone will ensure that we are not put to shame. If it falls short, it will be his responsibility".

194. The mother-in-law got the experience just as she had resolved. Without any difficulty, all the guests and others had the meal.

195. Whoever had come, ate. Everything happened as desired. Yet the food remained in the containers which were as full as in the beginning.

196. Such is the power of the *udi*. It is the nature of the saints to help. One experiences as one has faith.

197. Enough. While narrating the greatness of the *udi*, I am reminded of another story of Nevaskar regarding his immense faith. Listen to it.

198. At one point, I had a doubt that this would mean a digression. Whatever it may be I felt like narrating it according to the circumstances.

199. Resolving thus, I am relating the story at this juncture. If you consider it inappropriate, the listeners should pardon me.

200. Once Raghu Patil of Shirdi went as a guest to Nevasa and stopped over at Nevaskar's home.

201. One night when the cattle had been tied up, with a strong rope to an iron nail fixed in the ground, a poisonous snake entered the cowshed hissing, all of a sudden.

202. Everyone was dumbfounded on seeing such an incident. The snake spread out its hood and sat fully stretched out.

203. The cattle began to low and clamoured to get out. Nevaskar firmly believed that Sai himself had appeared there.

204. Now there was no alternative but to let the cattle out, in case they stepped on the snake and brought about a calamity.

205. When Nevaskar saw the snake from a distance he was filled with joy, and had horripilation all over his body. He prostrated with all his limbs.

206. He said: "It is Sai's grace that he has come to meet in the form of a snake." He brought a cup full of milk for the snake.

207. How wonderful was the sentiment of Balaji! He did not have an iota of fear. Observe what he said to the snake. Listeners should hear it attentively.

208. "Why, oh Baba! do you hiss and make a noise? Do you want to frighten us? Now have this cup of milk and drink it peacefully".

209. How would a cup be enough! Thinking so, he brought a big vessel full of milk and put it before the snake without any fear. Fear is only in the mind.

210. After putting the milk near the snake, he sat at his earlier place which was neither far nor too near. His face showed wonder about the snake.

211. The appearance of a snake is frightening. All do not think alike. Everyone else was perturbed and wondered how this danger would be averted.

212. There was danger even if they stepped out lest the snake went into the inner part of the house because it would be more difficult to take him out. They all sat keeping a watch.
213. Here, the snake had his fill of the milk. Without anyone noticing he disappeared. Everyone was astonished.
214. Then the whole cowshed was searched, but they found no trace of it. Most of them were relieved but Nevaskar was fretting.
215. If it had been seen leaving, as he had seen it at the beginning, entering the cowshed, he would have been satisfied. This is what was causing him to fret.
216. Bala had two wives and young children. Sometimes they came from Nevasa for *darshan*.
217. Baba bought *saris* and blouse pieces for both of them and gave them these items with his blessings. Such was the devotee Balaji!
218. The path of the *Satcharita* is simple. Wherever it is read, it becomes *Dwarkamayi* and Sai definitely appears there.
219. There itself are the banks of the *Godavari* ; there itself is the nearby pilgrimage place of Shirdi; there itself is Sai together with the *dhuni* who removes all difficulties, as soon as he is remembered.
220. Where the Sai *Charita* is regularly recited, Sai resides there always. If the *Charita* is repeatedly read with full faith, it pleases him, in all respects.
221. Remembering Sai, the Cloud of Self Bliss, chanting his name daily it is not necessary to practise any other means of prayer and penance or any other ways of meditation.
222. Having love for Sai's feet, all those who apply and ingest Sai's *vibhuti* regularly, they attain all that they desire.
223. They will be fulfilled by attaining all the four goals of life, including righteousness. The deeper meaning of all this will be clear to them, together with the worldly and spiritual matters.
224. By the application of *udi*, great sins including the greatest[7] and lesser sins are totally uprooted and one is purified inwardly and outwardly.
225. The devotees are aware of the greatness of this use of the *vibhuti*. But I have described all this at length for the benefit of the listeners.
226. It is not proper to say that I have lengthened the description because even I do not know the full extent of its greatness. Yet for the benefit of the listeners, I have collected everything and described it.
227. Therefore, this is my only prayer to the listeners – after paying

obeisance at the feet of Sai, experience the *udi's* greatness yourself. At least, follow my words to this extent.

228. There is no room for doubts and scepticism. One should have great devotion. A wavering mind is not required. One should have supreme faith.

229. Only the critics, the argumentative and the doubters who have no faith are unable to acquire the highest knowledge of saints. Only pure devotees can achieve that.

230. Whatever is missing or additional in the stories, believe that everything is inspired by Sai and read the Sai *Satcharita* without finding faults.

231. In this way, Sai the most compassionate and loving has established his own image in the minds of the interested readers, so that they may always remember him.

232. Where is Goa and where is Shirdi? Sai has openly narrated in detail the story of how a theft happened there, which will please the listeners, in the next chapter.

233. Therefore Hemad places his head at Sai's feet, with his heart and soul, and very humbly requests the listeners to be ready to listen to it respectfully.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the thirty-fifth chapter, of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Erasure of Doubts and Misapprehensions and the Embellishment of *Vibhuti*".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Baba used to often speak about an oil-monger, when he meant a wicked person with evil thoughts.
2. Dharamsi was fond of good food and Baba was referring to this weakness of his.
3. This lady was a Deshasth Brahmin by caste. Her real name was Sunderabai Shirsagar. But whenever she called anybody, she called them "Radhakrishna". Therefore she came to be known as Radhakrishnabai. She always kept a brass image of Balkrishna near her. She kept it with her while bathing, eating, sleeping etc. Sai Baba called her 'Ram Krishni' and daily before he sat down to eat, he sent her two *bhakris* and some vegetables etc. in the afternoon. She did not step into the *Masjid*. She was a child widow when she came to Shirdi and stayed on to render service to a saint, which she did whole-heartedly. She always sang *bhajans*.

4. He was a staunch devotee of Baba. Abandoning wife, children and home, he lived in Shirdi for Sai's service.
5. Sorghum.
6. This lady possibly was the son's wife, as it is traditionally the son and his wife who observe the anniversary.
7. Such as the killing of a Brahmin, drinking, theft etc.

Getting up early in the morning, taking the broom in her hand, she (Radhakishanmai) would sweep all the paths used by Baba. Blessed was her service! (Ch.35, ovi 179)

36

The All-Pervasiveness of Sai and the Fulfilment of His Blessings

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Now refer to the last chapter wherein an assurance was given to relate the interesting story of the theft. Be fully attentive to it.
2. This is not a story but a drink of eternal bliss, which increases the thirst for more. To pacify that thirst, another story will follow.
3. The listeners will be pleased on hearing that it destroys the distress of this mundane existence and grants a state of happiness.
4. One who is fortunate enough to desire his own well-being, he should be ready to listen with reverence to the narration of Sai's stories.
5. The greatness of the saints is beyond limits! None is able to describe it fully. I am truly aware that I have no qualifications.
6. Enough of the ego of the narrator! Sai, the Sagacious, can find anyone to describe his attributes so that his devotees can hear them.
7. He indeed is the Swan in the Lake in the form of the Highest. He is the Swan, looking at the world in him, or within him and finding himself in that world, remaining truly indifferent, but rejoicing in the food of pearls in the form of *Brahman* and enjoying the spirit of great adventure.
8. One who has no name or place of his own, but has incomparable glory, he can make a pauper into a wealthy man, instantly, by merely raising an eyebrow.
9. He, who is Absolute Knowledge Incarnate, shows the true form of God, remaining uninvolved except as a witness, by creating innumerable circumstances.
10. He gives *darshan* in different forms to those on whom he showers

his grace by creating inconceivable occurrences. Listen to the glory of that Great Soul.

11. Those who meditate upon him with unswerving concentration or sing loving *bhajans* (praising and worshipping him), they will never lack anything because he takes care of them completely.

12. He enjoys his stories being told and, therefore, reminds me constantly by being instrumental in creating a speaker and listeners, to fulfil the wishes of the devotees.

13. He who has enjoined himself to Vishnu (Chakrapani), and is fully engrossed in the spiritual attainment by leaving aside the worldly ties, has uplifted many beings.

14. He who is worshipped within the country and abroad and he for whom the flag of devotion flies high, he invites the meek and the poor and fulfils the desires of all.

15. Be that whatsoever. Now listen with reverence to this story of Sai which is supremely holy. The ears of the listeners and the tongue of the speaker will be purified.

16. Two gentlemen from Goa came for Sai's darshan. Both of them humbled themselves at Sai's feet and were pleased with the *darshan*.

17. Though both came together, Sai asked for *dakshina* from one only. "Give me fifteen rupees", he said, which that gentleman gave happily.

18. He asked nothing from the second person. But on his own he gave thirty five rupees. Sai immediately refused to take them. He was greatly surprised.

19. Madhavrao was there at that time. Seeing this discrimination, he asked Sai about it. Listen to it.

20. "Baba, why do you do this? Both friends have come together. You asked *dakshina* from one and returned what was voluntarily offered by the other.

21. "Why should there be any discrimination by a saint? On your own, you asked from one and returned what was given by the other, by his own wish. You disappointed the latter.

22. "You seem pleased with the smaller offering and refused the larger sum. If I had been in your place, I would not have behaved like this."

23. "Shamya, you do not know anything. I do not take anything from anybody. It is the *Masjid* Mai (presiding deity of the *Masjid*) who asks for what is owing to her. The giver is then free from debts.

24. "Do I have a home? Or do I have a family, that I should need money? I am free in all respects.

25. "But debt, enmity and murder have to be atoned for, as there is no escape. People take vows to some deity at the time of need. But it is a problem for me, who is trying to uplift them.
26. "You do not worry about that. You implore me only at that particular moment. I am always pleased with those devotees of mine who have no debt.
27. "Initially, he was poor. He took a vow to give his first pay to God, which was fifteen rupees. But later he forgot.
28. "Thereafter, from Rupees 15/- it increased to Rupees 30/-; then from Rupees 30/- it rose to Rupees 60/-; to Rupees 100/-. Though the salary doubled or even increased four – fold, he totally forgot about the vow.
29. "In this way, his salary increased to Rupees 700/-. By his good fortune he came here. Then I asked for my Rupees 15/-, being that amount, in the guise of *dakshina*".
30. "Now listen to another story. Once when I was wandering on the sea shore, I came across a huge mansion and I sat down on its verandah.
31. "The owner of the mansion was a Brahmin, cultured and very rich. He welcomed me with affection and fed me sumptuously.
32. "There, in a nice, clean, selected place, with a sliding shutter, he gave me a place to sleep and I fell asleep.
33. "Seeing that I was sound asleep, someone removed the stone and broke the wall and cut my pocket without my knowledge. He stripped me of all that I had.
34. "When I woke up and realised what had happened, I was in tears, as I had been robbed of Rs. 30,000/-. I was devastated.
35. "The money was in bank notes. When I had this sudden loss, I was shocked. The Brahmin tried to console me.
36. "I was too grief stricken to even eat or drink. For fifteen days, I sat at the same place on the verandah.
37. "After the fifteenth day, a wandering fakir, singing couplets in the Urdu language on a metaphysical theme, appeared suddenly and saw me crying.
38. "Upon his asking me the reason for my grief, I told him the whole tale. He told me that my difficulty would be solved provided, I acted as he told me.
39. "He said that he would give me the name of a fakir and his whereabouts. If I surrendered to him, he would get back my money.

40. "But he asked me to observe a vow until I recovered what I desired by abstaining from my favourite food, whereupon my goal would be attained.
41. "I acted upon the fakir's advice, got my money back. Then I left the *wada* and went back to the sea-shore.
42. "While thus walking, I saw a steamer but I could not get in as it was crowded. Then a good-natured peon interceded for me and got me a place in the steamer.
43. "By good fortune, the steamer reached the other shore. When I caught the train and came back home, I saw the Masjidmai".
44. Here Baba's story ended. Later Shama was instructed to take the guests home and to feed them there.
45. May it be whatsoever. Later, food was served on the leaf plates. Madhavrao was curious and asked the guests if they understood the story.
46. "In reality, Sai Baba has lived here continuously. There is no sea, nor steamer, nor captain. He is fully aware of this.
47. "Which was the Brahmin? And which was the huge mansion? He has spent his whole life under a tree. From where could he get such a large sum of money that could later be stolen by a thief?
48. "He began relating this story only after your arrival; and in this way he told you something connected with your past".
49. Then, the guests replied in voices choking with tears : "Sai is omniscient. He is the *Parabrahma Avatar*, without any duality. He is Infinite and All-Pervading.
50. "Whatever he has said now is word to word our own story. As soon as this delicious repast is over we will tell you everything in detail.
51. "Whatever Baba said has actually taken place in every detail. How did he come to know without even knowing us? Therefore, it is beyond our comprehension".
52. So be it. After the meal, when they were chewing betel-nut leaves, with Madhavrao present, they started telling the stories.
53. One of the two gentleman said: "The Ghats are my native place but I was destined to earn my livelihood from a place near the sea.
54. "Therefore, I went to Goa and thought of getting a job there. For that purpose, I began worshipping and propitiating Lord Dutta and took a vow to him with great reverence.
55. "I said: 'O' Lord, I need a job for the maintenance of the family. Therefore, be merciful and give me one. I prostrate at your feet.

56. "Within a short time, if you keep your word, I will offer to you my entire earnings of the first month'.

57. "By good fortune, Lord Dutta was propitious and, in a short time, the object of my vow was fulfilled. I began to get Rupees 15/- per month, as salary in the beginning.

58. "Later, as Sai Baba described, my promotions came but I totally forgot about the vow and Baba reminded me in this manner.

59. "It may be considered that *dakshina* was taken. But it was not *dakshina* but a repayment of a debt. He reminded me, by this pretext, of a very old vow".

60. Actually, Sai did not ask for money nor allowed his devotees to ask for the same. He considered wealth to be the cause of all evil and did not let his devotees have any greed for it.

61. A devotee like Mhalsapati, who was always attached at Sai's feet, and could hardly make both ends meet, even he was not allowed to make any money.

62. Sai himself distributed to people, many times, the monies that had come as *dakshina* ; but he did not give a farthing to him who was always in difficulties.

63. Mhalsapati too was a man of self respect. Though Sai was so generous, he never extended his hand to ask him for it.

64. Though his financial situation was dire, but he was very, very detached. He bore the difficulties of poverty always content with the little he had.

65. Once a very kind businessman, who was called 'Hansraj' felt like giving something to Mhalsapati.

66. Knowing his poverty stricken condition, he naturally got the good idea of helping him to the extent that he could, to give him some relief.

67. Though such was his condition, if anyone tried to give him something, Sainatha did not approve, as he preferred indifference to money.

68. So, observe, what that businessman did! Being melted with pity towards that devotee, when both were present in the Sai *Durbar*, he pushed some money in his hands.

69. With all humility, Mhalsapati returned it and said: "Without Sai's permission, I cannot accept it".

70. He was not a worshipper of money. He only yearned for spirituality. He had surrendered to Sai with body and mind, unselfishly and with a loving heart.

71. Hansraj entreated Sai but Sai did not touch a farthing and said : "Even my devotees are not lured by money and you will not find them fall prey to the pomp and show of money".
72. Now, the second visitor said : "Now I also have realised the whole matter. Listen, I will tell the whole story. You will enjoy listening to it.
73. My cook who had served me for thirty-five years, who was completely honest and faithful, on account of his misfortune was misled and he stole all my savings.
74. A cupboard had been fixed in the wall of my house. After stealthily pushing aside a stone, he made a hole in it, without any one's knowledge.
75. The cupboard to which Baba referred earlier he made a hole in that, for which he removed the stones from the wall, when every one was asleep.
76. And as Baba said furthermore, he took all my money, which was in bank notes. All that is the truth.
77. It was exactly thirty thousand! I do not know how Baba mentioned that amount. It was all my hard earned money. I was crying day and night.
78. My inquiries came to nothing. I did not know what to do. For a fortnight I was in a whirlpool of anxiety. I was at my wits end.
79. One day as I was sitting on the verandah, very depressed and morose, a fakir was passing by singing metaphysical couplets.
80. Seeing me sad and dejected, the fakir asked me the cause of my depression. Then I narrated to him the story in detail and he told me how to overcome the problem.
81. "In Kopergaon Taluka, in a village called Shirdi, there lives an Aulia called Sai. Take a vow to him.
82. "Foreswear eating something you relish and tell him mentally and truly 'I have given up eating this food till I have your *darshan*'".
83. "When the fakir said this to me. I immediately forsook eating rice and said: "Baba till my property is recovered and I have your *darshan*, I will not partake of it".
84. Barely had a fortnight passed and I do not know what came in the cook's mind, but of his own accord he came and returned all my money.
85. He said: "I lost my mind and thereby acted in this manner. I now put my head at your feet. Please say 'I forgive you'".
86. May that be whatsoever. Later on everything went well. I had an

intense desire to have Sai's *darshan*, which has been fulfilled to-day. Blessed is this good fortune!.

87. The one who came to console me when I was seated on the verandah, sad, depressed and in great misfortune, was not seen again.

88. I never met again the one who had such loving concern for me and who told me about Sai and directed me to Shirdi.

89. The one whom I met by chance, singing metaphysical couplets, and who made me take the vow – him I never met again.

90. I feel that, that fakir was truly this Sai *Aulia* of yours. To give me the benefit of taking his *darshan*, he himself became anxious.

91. Whatever may be the enticement held out by anyone, I had no desire to have this *darshan*. The fakir created this desire in me, at the outset, so that I could recover my money.

92. It would never be possible for him to covet Rupees 35/- from me, who gave me back my whole wealth only by making a vow to him and without any other effort.

93. On the contrary, we are ignorant people. To bring us on the path of spirituality, and to ensure our well-being he makes efforts and brings us to the path under these pretexts.

94. This is the purpose of this *Avatar*. Otherwise, how would we, who are devoid of devotion and insignificant, cross the ocean of worldly existence. Think of that calmly.

95. So be it. After recovering the stolen property I was overjoyed. And, as a result, I forgot all about my vow. The greed for money is dangerous.

96. Then observe that one day when I was near Kulaba[1], I saw Sai in my dream and immediately left for Shirdi.

97. Sai *Samartha* has described my travels. I was refused a place on the steamer, but a peon interceded for me and helped me to overcome my problem.

98. When I came to the steamer, these were my difficulties. And truly a peon, who was a stranger, interceded on my behalf.

99. Only then did the captain, who was initially rude, give me a place on the steamer and obliged me.

100. Though the peon was a total stranger, he said that I was known to him. Therefore, I was allowed in and got a good seat.

101. Just as the story about the steamer, so was the story about the peon, which actually occurred in my case. Sai said it as if it had happened to him.

102. Having this marvellous experience my intellect is baffled. I feel that this Sai is omnipresent.
103. There is not an atom which is not pervaded by him. He will grant similar experiences to others as he has given to me.
104. Who am I? And where do I come from? How fortunate I am that he has dragged me with all these efforts and placed me on the spiritual path.
105. What made me take the vow? What caused my savings to be stolen? What a marvel it is about the fulfilment of the vow and the return of the savings without efforts!
106. How inconceivably fortunate am I! He whose *darshan* I had not taken earlier, nor had I thought of, nor heard of, he was taking care of me!
107. Then how much more fortunate are those devotees who have lived with him for many years, humbled at his feet, and served him day and night!
108. Greatly fortunate are all those with whom Sai has played, laughed, sat, talked, walked, eaten, slept, and even got angry with.
109. He has shown such loving concern for me who has done nothing for him. Blessed is your state that you are so close to him!
110. It seems that your store of earlier merits has caused this human form and brought this personage to Shirdi. You are infinitely blessed!
111. By my immense good fortune I have attained to Shirdi. I feel that for Sree Sai's *darshan yatra* I would sacrifice everything.
112. Sai, the Pure and Benevolent, is the great *Vaishnav*. He is truly the sprout of the Tree of Knowledge which shines like the sun in the Sea of Consciousness.
113. So be it. I also must have some merit to have met this *Mashidai* (Dwarakamayi), who made me fulfil my vow and gave me his *darshan*.
114. He is my Lord Dutta. He ordered me to take this vow. He made me get a seat in the steamer and brought me to Shirdi for the *darshan*.
115. In this way, Sai showed his all-pervasive nature and how he resided in the hearts of all, bearing witness to all that happens everywhere.
116. Seeing Sai's smiling visage, I felt extremely happy, and though being worldly, forgot all about the pains of the worldly existence. My blissful joy cannot be contained.
117. Let everything happen as per destiny; and my mind certainly attain to that state. May my love be eternal at Sai's feet and may he dwell always in my heart and eyes!

118. Sai *Leelas* are inconceivable and unfathomable! There is no limit to his obligations. O' Compassionate One, I feel like wearing out my body and mind in your service.

119. So be it. Now a story which is a digression. Listen now to the words of Sai by being attentive for a while as they are like the writing of Brahma.

120. The wife of Sakharam Aurangabadkar, who lived in Sholapur city was anxious about a child, and therefore, came to Shirdi.

121. Hearing about the inconceivable story of Sai Baba - the holy saint, she came for his holy *darshan*, bringing along her stepson.

122. Though she had been married for twenty seven years, she had not conceived[2]. She had got exhausted making vows to gods and goddesses. She had lost all hope.

123. So be it. Thus this married woman came for Baba's *darshan* with a purpose. She thus came to Shirdi, when she had an idea.

124. "Baba is always surrounded by devotees. How will I find him alone? How will I be able to tell him what is in my heart?" Therefore, she became intensely anxious.

125. The *Masjid* was open and so was the courtyard. There were always devotees hovering around Baba. How would she get a quiet moment to describe to him the earnest desire?

126. She and her stepson, Vishvanath, stayed on for two months, rendering service to Baba.

127. Listen to what this woman, with a desire, entreated Madhavrao seeing that neither Vishvanath nor anyone else was near Baba.

128. "You, at least, find an opportunity to tell Baba my heart's longing, when Baba is in a good mood.

129. That too when he is alone and not surrounded by his family of devotees. Tell him that at the earliest opportunity so that no one can hear".

130. Madhavrao replied: "The *Masjid* is never without people. Someone or the other keeps continuously coming for *darshan*.

131. "This *Durbar* of Sai is open. No one is forbidden to enter it. But I am suggesting something. Keep it in your mind carefully.

132. "To make efforts is my duty. He is the giver of success and the abode of auspiciousness. Finally, he will give you peace and relieve you of your worries.

133. "You should merely wait with a coconot and incense sticks in the courtyard, on the stone, when Baba sits down for his meal.

134. "Then after the meal is over, if I find him in a good mood, I will beckon you and you should come up only then".

135. So be it. After some time, when the destined moment came, one day after Sai's meal was over, he got an unexpected opportunity.

136. Sai having washed his hands, Madhavrao was drying them with a cloth. Observe what Sai did while he was in a joyful mood!

137. In a burst of affection, Baba then pinched Madhavrao's cheek. Listen then to the loving conversation between God and his devotee at that opportune time.

138. Though Madhavrao was full of humility, he feigned anger and jokingly said to Baba : "Is this behaviour good?

139. "We do not want such a mischievous God who pinches our cheek with such force! Are we so awed by you? Is this the fruit of intimacy?"

140. Then Baba replied : "Have I ever touched you in all the seventy-two generations? Do you ever remember such an occasion?"

141. To which Madhavrao said: "We want such a God who always gives us wonderful and novel sweets to eat when we are hungry.

142. "We do not want your respect nor a divine vehicle to attain the heavens. Give me only the boon of having faith at your feet".

143. Then Baba started to speak : "Yes, indeed, I have come for that and that is why I started giving you food and got fondly attached to you".

144. By this time, they were near the bannister. When Baba sat down on his own *asan*, Madhavrao signalled to the lady, who was sitting alert for her purpose.

145. No sooner than the signal was made, she got up immediately and hurriedly climbed the steps of the *Masjid*. She came in front of Baba and bowed with humility.

146. She immediately offered the coconut at his feet and bowed at the lotus feet. Baba then struck the coconut with his own hand on the bannister forcefully.

147. He Said: "Shama, what does this say? The coconut is rattling a lot". Shama then took the opportunity. Hear what he said to Baba.

148. "The lady wishes that a child may be similarly rolling in her womb. Grant her that. May she be enjoined to your feet always! And let her problem be solved!

149. "Cast a merciful glance on her. Place the coconut in her *oti* [3]. May she have sons and daughters with your blessings".

150. Then Baba told him ; "Can the coconut give any issue? How can there be such foolish belief? I think the people have lost their mind".

151. "Shama said: "I know the marvel of your words. Your words are so valuable that she will have a series of children, spontaneously.

152. "But these days you are making a distinction. You are not giving her real blessings. You are only wrangling. Give her the coconut as *prasad* ".

153. "Break the coconut", Baba said. Shama said: "Place it in her '*oti*'". The higgling went on for quite a while, when Baba ultimately yielded.

154. He said : "Go, she will have a child." Shama said: "When? Give a reply". Baba said: "After twelve months". The coconut was forcefully broken.

155. Half of it was eaten by both i.e. by Baba and Shama. The remaining half was given to the lady. Madhavrao said to the lady: "You are a witness to my words.

156. "Lady, if from today before twelve months are complete you do not have a child, listen to what I will do.

157. "I will break such a coconut against this God's head and drive him out of the *Masjid*. If I fail in this, I will not call myself Madhav.

158. "I will not allow such a God to live in the *Masjid*. I say this certainly. In course of time, you will realise the truth of these words. Believe this surely and firmly".

159. Being thus assured, the lady was very happy. Prostrating at Baba's feet, she returned to her home.

160. Knowing that Shama was invariably obedient, Sai fulfilled the devotee's wish pulled by the strings of love and did not at all take offence at his words.

161. Sai, the Compassionate One, the Cloud of Mercy, the Protector of those who have surrendered to him, to ensure that the words of the devotees came true, fondly fulfilled them.

162. Shama was his favourite devotee, and the saint fulfilled the devotee's wish, which was asked for in ignorance and fondness, whether it was proper or not. This was his own vow.

163. So be it. Before the twelve months were completed, Baba fulfilled his promise. Within three months of the conversation, the lady conceived.

164. Fortunately, she became the mother of a son. She came to Shirdi with her husband and five month old child for *darshan*.

165. The husband too happily paid obeisance at Sai's feet and offering five hundred rupees expressed his unspoken gratitude.

166. The monies were later utilised to build the walls of the stable for Baba's horse Shyamakaran, at the existing site where he used to be tethered.

167. Therefore, think of this Sai, remember Sai and meditate upon Sai. This is Hemad's own refuge who did not run helter-skelter anywhere.

168. Why roam hither and thither when the *kasturi* [4] is in one's own navel? Always being humble at Sai's feet, *Hemad* enjoys incomparable bliss.

169. The next chapter is more interesting than this about how the devotees took Baba in procession from the *Masjid* to the *Chavadi*, with great joy.

170. Also the story about Baba's cooking vessel and the giving of *prasad* with humour. Listen to that in the next chapter which will increase the enthusiasm.

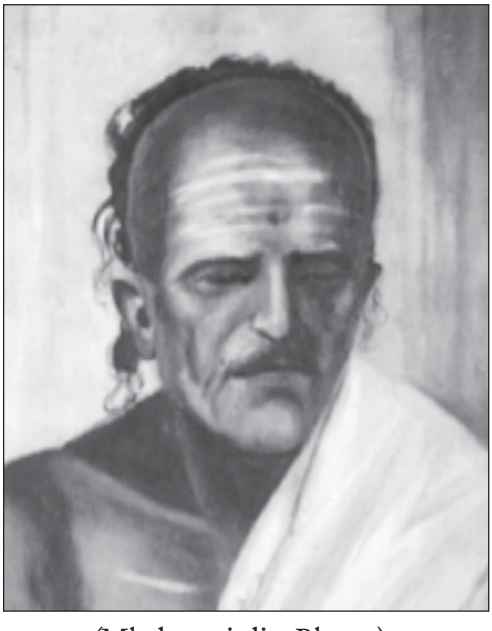
May there be well-being. This is the end of the thirty-sixth chapter, of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The All-Pervasiveness of Sai and the Fulfilment of His Blessings".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. On the west coast of the present Raigad district in Maharashtra.
2. Though she was regularly undergoing the menstrual flux.
3. Portion of her sari touching her lap.
4. Musk.



(Mhalsapati alias Bhagat)

Mhalsapati too was a man of self respect. Though Sai was so generous, he never extended his hand to ask him for it. (Ch. 36 ovi 63)

Though his financial situation was dire, but he was very, very detached. He bore the difficulties of poverty always content with the little he had. (Ch. 36 ovi 64)

He was not a worshipper of money. He only yearned for spirituality. He had surrendered to Sai with body and mind, unselfishly and with a loving heart. (Ch. 36 ovi 70)

37

Description of the Chavadi

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Twice blessed is Sai's life. Blessed is his daily routine. His ways and actions are wonderful and indescribable in entirety.
2. Unfathomable are his true deeds. Blessed is the course of his life. Twice blessed is his irresolute and austere life of mighty resolves which was like walking on the razor's edge.
3. Sometimes he was intoxicated with Divine Bliss; sometimes he was content with Self Knowledge; sometimes he was aloof from all his actions. Such was his indeterminate state.
4. Sometimes he was quite actionless, yet not asleep. Keeping in mind his aim, he always abided in his own Self.
5. Sometimes he would be as propitious as the ocean, but also boundless, unfathomable and deep. Who can aptly describe his ineffable nature?
6. He regarded men as brothers and women as sisters and mothers. He was a perfect and perpetual celibate, as everyone was fully aware.
7. May the understanding we received in his pious company remain with us, undiminished, until death.
8. May our desire to serve him be abundant. Let our devotion be exclusively at his feet. May we see God in all beings and ever love his name.
9. Those who endeavoured to understand his every action were baffled and at the end could only be still and non-plussed.
10. Many people fight for the joys of heaven. They extol heaven's greatness. They consider life on earth contemptible since there is fear of death here.

11. In a way one assumes a form from the unmanifest. That is called the visible state. Again one returns to the unmanifest state. This they call death.
12. Unrighteous conduct, ignorance, anger, hatred etc. are chains which fetter us to death. Those who can completely overcome them, only can enter heaven.
13. Heaven? What else is heaven? Detachment is heaven. Consider one's own *atma* as the spirit that pervades the universe excluding all sorrow.
14. In that state, there is no cause for diseases etc., nor worries, problems, pains and no hunger or thirst; and none has fear of old age.
15. Where there is no fear of death, and no precepts and prohibitions, life carries on without any fear whatsoever. That is the divine heavenly state.
16. The same essence that pervades from Brahma to the animate, filling the movable and the unmovable alike, that same essence is also there in the other world as well as here. It excludes plurality.
17. Although this principle is devoid of all attributes of mundane existence, it appears to be non – *Brahman* to the individual soul, deluded by ignorance on account of the association with limiting adjuncts.
18. '*Parabrahma* is something different from me. I am different'. Those, who believe in such discrimination, are bound by the laws of death.
19. Death follows birth and after death re-birth. This interminable circle of nature is the fate of those who think thus.
20. What is the use of a heaven which is attained by the most difficult sacrifice, penance and charity, but is devoid of the remembrance of Narayan's (the Lord's) feet?
21. We do not wish for a place in heaven where there is only sensory enjoyment. Of what use is it to us, if it makes us forget *Govind*'s (the Lord's) name?
22. Be it in heaven, or in hell, the sensual pleasure is the same. The pleasures of *Indra* and an ass are exactly of the same nature.
23. *Indra* moves about in his pleasure garden as happily as the ass rolls on the rubbish heap. The pleasures of both are comparable. There is not the slightest difference.
24. Why strive for a place from where one is bound to come down, once the accumulated store of merit has been exhausted? It is better, instead to be born on this earth. The greatness of this earth is unfathomable.

25. Is that heaven important because one's life span there is of thousands of years? This brief span on earth is far better than that.
26. In life which is transient, whatever action is done, if it is all surrendered to the Lord, the person attains freedom from fear.
27. Of what use is a place where the devotees do not listen to and recite God's and Guru's stories or dance and sing to worship God?
28. Knowledge acquired about the union of *Brahman* and *Atman*, that is permanent; and the means for achieving the very best. For that, the best place is earth and not the heavens.
29. Surrender to the Guru body, speech and mind and the five '*pranas*'. The questioning intellect should be merged in the Guru, totally dependent on him.
30. What fear of the world can there be after thus surrendering to the *Sadguru*? And why unnecessarily worry about the worldly transactions when he is there to solve all problems?
31. Where ignorance abides, there exists attachment for progeny and property and constant worries about the worldly matters, leaving not a trace of good thoughts.
32. Ignorance is the root cause for establishing this plurality. Therefore it is necessary to acquire knowledge of *Shastras* in *Sanskrit* through a qualified teacher.
33. Once this ignorance is removed, even a trace of plurality will not remain, and will release the person from the cycle of birth and death. This is caused by the knowledge of oneness.
34. He who has even the slightest trace of separate identity will suffer the cycle of birth and death, for creation and destruction invariably follow that feeling.
35. The 'good' or the well-being is the subject matter of knowledge undoubtedly; and where only the pleasant is the subject matter, it is definitely ignorance.
36. The greatest fear in the world is that of death. To escape from it hold fast to the Guru's feet, for it is he who will grant you unity consciousness.
37. Where there is duality and plurality, there only such fear can enter. Therefore, where there is not even a trace of such fear, serve the feet of such a Guru.
38. Adorn the forehead of such a Guru with sandalwood paste of pure love and offer him the yellow garments of your devotion. He will show to his devotees that which pervades the Universe.

39. Offer him the throne of firm faith, decorate it with the right '*satvik*' emotions and bathe him with tears of joy. He will then be pleased.
40. Put arround his waist a girdle of devotion, ward off the evil eye with salt and lemon etc; surrender yourself to him and thereafter, do his *arati*.
41. The extinction or destruction of anything or any work is based on its existence. If an earthen pot is broken with a stone then its form no longer exists.
42. It does not mean that there is not a trace of the pot's existence. If the broken pieces of the pot are put together, then it can take its original form again.
43. Therefore, that which is known as the destruction of the effect is really dependent on the permanent existence of the cause. Therefore the end of the body of anyone results not in a void.
44. No action is done without a reason. What is imperceptible becomes perceptible because it is enjoined to truth always. This is well-known through experience.
45. The chain of cause and effect only displays the lesser and the greater degree of subtlety. In such a state the gross effect is destroyed. What exists or remains is verily the subtle cause.
46. On the destruction of that also, there remains something still more subtle where the cogniser reaches a state of cognising all the senses, the mind as well as the intellect.
47. In short, where the intellect comes to an end there alone the concrete turns back into the abstract. Nevertheless, the existence of the cause that is the abstract cannot be clouded, as existence shines everywhere.
48. Intellect gives support to desires. Therefore, immediately, on its extinction there appears *Atman* and the state of non-decay at the feet.
49. Ignorance, illusion, desire and action are verily the main attributes of death. On alleviation of all these, bondage comes to an end.
50. On the destruction of all bonds, *Atman* effortlessly manifests, just as on the scattering of clouds the self-luminous sun is revealed and shines.
51. 'I am the body, this is my wealth'. This is immense ego. These are the knots with which *Maya* ties our hearts and which are the causes of all our sorrows.
52. Once if this body dies and another is acquired because of *karmas*, to annihilate the seeds of those *karmas*, then if one fails to destroy those *karmas*, then another birth is certain.

53. Once again, the seeds grow into trees. The body is acquired because of the seeds of *vasanas*. Thus, this is an endless cycle till all the *vasanas* end.

54. Eradication of desires from the very roots will remove the knots of the hearts. Such a man becomes immortal. This is the teaching in the *Vedas*.

55. A condition, in which one has transcended righteous or unrighteous behaviour, as prescribed in the *shastras*, which is called *viraja* (pure) destroys all acts of ignorance and there is no place for death.

56. Deliverance from *vasanas* brings about an union with *Brahmananda* (Divine Bliss) that which cannot be described in words, spoken or written.

57. Complete knowledge of *Parabrahma* is itself the absence of all evil – that itself is the ultimate achievement, as laid down in the *shrutis* and the *smritis*.

58. "Knowledge and experience of Brahma is the ultimate". This is the highest state of *Brahmanand*. What greater excellence can there be? "All the sorrows of the *Atma* are crossed over".

59. To completely cross the worldly ocean and reach the yonder shores, Knowledge of Brahma is the best and essential means to attain everything.

60. Have full faith and absolute patience. They are *Uma* and *Maheshwar* in manifest form. The Lord who pervades the universe will not be visible in your heart till he lays his hand of mercy on your head.

61. Sainath, the Supreme Guru, whose words had unfailing potency said: "What is needed is faith and a little courage and the greatest glory is yours".

62. All the world that is seen, is after all unreal. It is necessary to accept this. Take the instance of things seen in a dream which entirely vanish on coming to an awakening condition or stage.

63. So far is the ken of reason (intellect). Upto this only is the existential character of the individual soul. But that stage, where there is no room either for existence or non-existence, is really the stage of truth i.e. the Highest Soul.

64. That which is devoid of the cognition of *Sat* and *Asat* etc. from any idea of gender and is bereft of all attributes is verily the all-encompassing nature of the Preceptor expressed in the form of different words.

65. *Atman* is without any attributes, beyond old age, birth or death. It is ancient and eternal, indestructible and beyond decay.

66. It is perpetual, unborn, ancient, all-pervading like the sky, unending, and indivisible, ungrowing and unchangeable.

67. Then who can describe that which is beyond words, without form, without beginning or end, unfathomable, imperishable, without smell, without taste and untainted.

68. Thus, this *Atman* which is attributeless and invisible is not known because of ignorance. Then remove this ignorance by knowledge. But do not ever call that *Atman* non-existant.

69. How wonderful was that realised state of Sree Sai, which was his personal grandeur! Time, the thief, has snatched it away. Would it ever be seen again?

70. Let us not bother about the devotees who are attached to money, progeny, wife. Even the most emancipated *yogis* who came for *darshan* got deeply attached to his lotus feet.

71. Blessed is the devotee who is in the world but detached from the bondage of all desires and deeds and from the body and home.

72. He who has Sai only as his object of vision, can he see anything else? Wherever he gazes, he sees no place which is devoid of Sai.

73. He who chants Sai's name and has love for Sai in his heart is always assured of his well-being and repose. Sai himself protects him.

74. Same is the case for him who hears only Sai, and speaks of nothing but Sai, inhales only Sai's fragrance and savours only Sai's name on his tongue.

75. How wonderful was Sai's smiling visage which granted the purest of happiness! Blessed and fortunate is he that saw it and savoured the nectar of his words.

76. The store of our well-being and the source of our peace and happiness, he was full of discrimination and detachment and ever alert from within.

77. Just as the calf though it has had its fill of milk does not leave the mother'side, similarly the mind should be tied with a rope at the feet of the Guru.

78. To attain the grace and love from the Guru, bow down in the dust of his lotus feet. Bear in mind his advice and experience it at every step.

79. While engaged in sense pleasures, to your heart's content, bear in mind the love for Sai, because that will be of help ultimately in the achievement of both – the worldly benefits and the spiritual goals.

80. The collyrium from one who has attained command over charms

and spells shows the wealth that is buried under the earth to the one who is born with legs foremost (*payalu*). Similarly, the dust from the Guru's feet gives the spiritual knowledge and scientific knowledge.

81. Whatever are the characteristics of a *Siddha* should be the means for the seeker to learn with long practice and exercise.

82. Clarified butter (ghee) can be made from milk. But if the milk is not made sour, there will be no buttermilk nor clarified butter, because all these depend upon certain actions to be performed.

83. Without churning the buttermilk one cannot obtain butter; and unless the butter is boiled on the fire, tasty clarified butter will not be available.

84. What is required is the power of previous impressions and intelligence on account of practice in the past. Without studies there will be no purification of the mind, without which the acquisition of spiritual knowledge is really unattainable.

85. The mind needs to be purified. Then only can Self Realisation be achieved. So long as that stage is not achieved do not give up devotion to God.

86. One needs the foundation of devotion to God to erect the temple of Self Realisation and for the four spires of *Mukti* (liberation) to shine and the flag of asceticism to fly.

87. Day and night, the dogs and the pigs wallow in the mire and eat the excreta. They are enjoying the sense pleasure. Should it be the same with human beings?

88. The human being should do penance and achieve purification of the mind whereby the *Brahman* is attained completely. Such behaviour, in accordance with religion is needed, at the outset.

89. Service rendered to sages becomes the abode for deliverance, whereas sexual indulgences open the doors of hell. These are the words from the revered elders, which need to be borne in mind always.

90. One whose conduct is always correct and good, who eats just enough to sustain his body, and is not attached to home or wife – such a person is blessed and a sage.

91. Those who constantly meditate upon Sai (without closing their eyes), Sai himself thinks of them being obliged to them – see the wonder of this experience!

92. Blessed is the greatness of chanting the Lord's name! Even the Guru then remembers the devotee. The meditator becomes the one meditated upon, both completely forgetting themselves.

93. "You are responsible for your actions. For me, I constantly dwell upon you". Many people will remember such loving words from Baba.

94. We do not need the scriptures. Just this one religious work on Sai is enough. Irrespective of the number of sins committed, he is our protector from all the difficulties.

95. If it is not possible to read consistently the entire book, just concentrate and fill your heart with the chapters on devotion to the Guru. Listen to them everyday as a rule.

96. Read this biography regularly at any time of the day. Sree Hari together with your *Gururaj*, will certainly meet his devotee.

97. Goddess Lakshmi will permanently abide in the home where it is read regularly. At least if one week's reading of the whole book is done, poverty will be driven away.

98. Do not think that I am saying this, because that will create doubts. Sai himself speaks through my speech. Leave aside troublesome imagination.

99. Sai who is the treasure house of all virtues, is the grantor of liberation to his devotees. His stories destroy all the sins of *Kaliyug*. Listeners should hear them.

100. The bliss of heaven is a mere trifle compared with the story of such a saint. Who would ever care to raise his head and look there, leaving aside the prompt benefit of this true story.

101. Happiness and sorrow are states of the mind. Association with a saint is always unchanging. It makes the mind one with consciousness and leaves no room for pain or pleasure.

102. Even *Indra* or *Chakravati* cannot experience the happiness, till the end of time, which the detached person sitting in solitude gets or which a devotee gets in *bhakti* (devotion).

103. Fate is very powerful. The intellect one has depends upon the actions of the previous births, but the destined consequences can be easily avoided by a devotee by the sport of the saint.

104. Though you make indefatigable efforts, you will not be able to avoid the experience of the fruits of *Karma* ; *Karma* which has started bearing fruit since it is associated with a stage of unavoidability making the disassociation from it truly impossible.

105. The saints can forsee the consequences of fate and the unwanted pain or the unimaginable happiness which follows.

106. Continuous chanting of your name is our vow, penance and charity; and a visit to Shirdi, from time to time, is our only pilgrimage.

107. "Sai, Sai" is the name that we remember and it is the *mantra* to propitiate all Gods. This is our meditation and this is our repetition. Whole heartedly surrender to him.

108. His real worship is a guileless, loving relationship. Then experience within yourself his inconceivable attainments.

109. Enough of this long-windedness. We need something sweet immediately. All must be eager to hear the interesting story, indicated earlier.

110. Knowing the feelings of eagerness of my listeners, I have made compact the marvel of the story, indicated earlier, so as to preserve perfect attention.

111. I, the lowliest, slow-witted, ignorant of the most elementary knowledge of poetical grammar, am being made to write what Sai wishes me to write, while holding my hand.

112. Who am I to write this story, if Sai had not given me the intellect? He tells his own story and he writes it himself.

113. Thus, now to the story referred to earlier of the *Chavadi*, *Handi* and the *Prasad*, as promised earlier. Listen to that narration.

114. I shall also relate to the listeners similar stories or any other stories which I can recall. Listen to them attentively.

115. Blessed is the marvel of the stories of Sai! Twice blessed are the effects of listening to them. One can experience one's Real Self by meditation on them, which increases our devotion at Sai's feet.

116. Now, at first the description of the *Chavadi* and then to give a general outline of the ceremony. Baba slept on alternate nights at the Chavadi, as a rule.

117. This routine of Baba, of sleeping one night in the *Masjid* and the next one in the *Chavadi* continued regularly till the *Samadhi*.

118. Later, from 10th December 1909, Baba's worship in the *Chavadi*, *bhajan* etc. also began.

119. Let me begin with the description of the ceremony in the *Chavadi* to the best of my ability. May Sai give me the grace of enthusiasm and God will help me in completing it.

120. On the night when Baba used to go the the *Chavadi*, the *bhajan* singing group came to the *Masjid* and the *bhajans* were done for some hours in the courtyard of the *Masjid*.

121. Behind, there was the beautifully decorated chariot; to the right was the small pedestal in which the sacred basil (*tulsi*) was planted; facing which Baba was himself seated; and, in the middle, were the singers doing the *bhajans*.

122. All devotees, men and women, who had a great respect for devotional songs, came to the courtyard early in all readiness for the *bhajans*.

123. The sound of the *bhajans* swelled on the waves of various instruments played by the devotees, such as *tal* [1], *chipli* [2], *Mridang* [3], *Khanjari* [4] and *ghol* [5], while some beat time with their hands.

124. Sai *Samartha* is the lodestone, who by his strength of the powers of attraction, dragged the devotees like iron filings at his feet without their knowledge.

125. The torch bearers would light their torches in the courtyard. The palanquin was decorated there itself by some. At the gates stood the staff bearers ready to proclaim salutations repeatedly.

126. At the road crossing (corner), there were arches, garlands and buntings. Flags flew high in the sky. The children were dressed in new clothes and ornaments.

127. Many rows of earthen lamps around the *Masjid* brightened it. At the entrance of the courtyard, the horse Shyamakaran stood fully caparisoned.

128. In the meanwhile, Tatya Patil would come with a group of people. He would sit near Baba, in all readiness to leave with Baba.

129. Though Baba was ready, until Tatya arrived he would remain seated in his own place, waiting for Tatya's arrival.

130. Until Tatya Patil made Baba stand up, putting his hand under Baba's arm, then only Baba made ready to go to the *Chavadi* from there.

131. Tatya addressed Baba as *Mama* (mother's brother or maternal uncle). Such was their reciprocal love and affinity. It was beyond compare.

132. He would be wearing his usual *kafani* ; and would place his *sataka* under his arm. He would carry the *chillum* and tobbaco and throw a cloth on the shoulder.

133. When Baba was thus ready, Tatya would drape a beautiful *zari* embroidered cloak on his body and head, properly covering him.

134. After this, Baba moved a little bit the front of the bundle of fuel – sticks lying at the foot of the back wall with his right toe, at its own place, for a moment.

135. Also, immediately afterwards, Sai would extinguish the lamp that was burning there with his right hand. Then he would leave for the *Chavadi*.

136. When Sai set off all the musical instruments started playing. Fireworks were lit, also powerfully luminant lamps like offerings to the gods; and the earthen lamps illumined the whole area.

137. Some played the horns; some blew the large brass trumpets; some played the drums and the cymbals; and there was no dearth of people keeping time by clapping to the music.

138. The *mridang* and the *veena* clanged amidst the loud shouting of Sai's name. In keeping with the *bhajans*, the men and the women walked in rows.

139. Holding banners and standards, some of which had the eagle imprinted, the congregation moved, dancing and jumping with joy and singing *bhajans*.

140. All the people were very joyous. They would leave with banners and standards in procession. The metal gongs and wind instruments made tumultous sounds, along with those who made proclamations with hands raised to the ears. There were salutations and the horse capered.

141. Thus, with the reverberations of the musical instruments, the procession left the *Masjid*. When Baba came to the steps, the ushers made proclamations.

142. The devotees would do *bhajans* with *tal*, *mridang*, *veena*, *chipli* and cymbals blissfully, at that place.

143. The devotees walked with delight holding the decorations and banners. On both sides of Baba, stood persons holding whisks and fanning him.

144. People folded their shawls, and cloths and spread them on the way, like carpets, on which Baba was made to walk, supported by devotees' hands, as other waved whisks over him.

145. Tatyaba held his left hand, while Mhalsapati held his right. Bapusaheb (Jog) held an umbrella as a conopy over his head and in this manner the retinue proceeded to the *Chavadi*.

146. In front was that copper coloured horse, which was called Shyamakaran. He was richly decorated and caparisoned and bells jingled on his feet.

147. The staff bearers walked ahead, proclaiming Sai's name. The canopy holders held on to it and the whisks were continuously waved by the whisk holders.

148. The musical instruments and the gongs played; and the devotees made the air resound with salutations. Thus the devotees collectively proceeded and the ushers lovingly made proclamations.

149. The ringing sound of the Lord's name was continuous. The *tal*, *jhanj, mridang* were harmonious. The devotees moved collectively to the beat of time, shouting and proclaiming.

150. Thus the devotees and the *bhajan* singers, full of delight and shouting hosannas (cry of adoration) to Sai on the way, arrived at the cross-roads.

151. The instruments, *tal, jhanj, dhol* and ghol, vehemently played. The surge of Sai's name was emphatic and the *bhajan* was loving and delightful.

152. Men and women walked with him, each filled with joy of the *bhajans*, shouting Sai's name, the sound of which reverberated in the sky.

153. The sky resounded with the playing of the instruments. The onlookers' hearts were filled with joy. The *Chavadi* procession was thus worth watching. The splendour and the decorations were incomparable.

154. As he stood facing the *Chavadi*, a lustre like the sun in the early morning or late evening sky shone like the heated, purified gold, from Sree's countenance.

155. The lustre of the face at that time shone like the spreading light of the early dawn. It was like the core of pure consciousness. Who would not take its benefit?

156. A *darshan* at that time was blessed! His face was aglow with a diffused red colour. He stood facing the north with a concentrated mind and seemed to be calling someone.

157. The musical instruments and the gongs resounded. Maharaj stood full of delight, moving his right hand up and then bringing it down, on and oft, at that time.

158. Dixit, a leading devotee, came with a silver platter filled with many flowers and showered the flowers on Baba's whole body, on and oft, at the time.

159. Kakasaheb kept on showering rose petals, mixed with red farinaceous powder, on Sai's forehead with love and devotion.

160. Thus, when Kaka showered those rose petals, mixed with red farinaceous powder, the gong, *jhanj and tal* sounded one beat, and the musical instruments played at their best.

161. The villagers who were Baba's devotees came for *darshan* with great love. At that time, Baba's cast of countenance emitting a reddish glow was marvellously evident.

162. Looking at that play of lustre on his face, the eyes of the onlookers widened with surprise. Their loving minds felt abundance of joy and were freed easily from the toil of existence.

163. Oh, that wonderful divine brilliance! Its beauty was like that of the

rising sun! The gong and other instruments resounded in front of him for a long time.

164. For more than one and a half hours, Baba stood at one place, facing north, moving his right hand up and down constantly.

165. His complexion, golden like the core of the *Ketaki* [6] flower, with a slightly reddish lustre on the face, cannot be described by the tongue. It has to be savoured by the eyes only.

166. Sometimes, Mhalsapati began to dance being possessed by some deity; but all were surprised to see that Baba's concentration was not in the least disturbed.

167. On Baba's right stood *Bhagat* (Mhalsapati) holding the hem of Baba's *kafni* very lightly; and to the left, Tatya Kote walked with a lantern in his hand.

168. How enjoyable was the celebration! which was nothing but a glorious exposition of love and devotion. The rich and the great gathered to watch the marvel of it!

169. Self luminosity brightened the extremely fair complexion. The moon-like brilliant countenance had just a little reddish glow. People filled their eyes with this indescribable beauty.

170. Baba walked slowly. The gathering of devotees walked on both sides with tremendous love and devotion, which choked everyone with exuberant delight.

171. Such a celebration is no longer there for anyone to behold. Those days and those times are gone. Let us bring solace to ourselves with the memories.

172. All the musical instruments played tumultously. Hosannas were shouted on the way. Taking Baba to the *Asan* at the *Chavadi*, he was offered a grand worship (*puja*).

173. The *Chavadi*'s ceiling was decorated with a white awning from which chandeliers and lamps were suspended, whose light was reflected in the mirrors. The whole place was brilliantly lit up.

174. All the assembled devotees gathered closely at the *Chavadi*. Then, Tatyaba spread out the *Asan* and helped Baba, by holding him, to sit on it.

175. On that excellent *Asan* which was prepared, a bolster was placed at the back for him to lean on. When Baba was settled in his seat, he was asked to wear an *Angarkha* (cloak).

176. Beautiful apparels were placed on his body and he was worshipped with great joy. The *Arati* was done at the top of their voices and he was presented with garlands and bouquets.

177. Annointing his hands with sandalwood paste and perfume, ornaments were placed on him after the expensive clothes. A crown also was placed on his head and they stared at him.

178. Sometimes it was a beautiful golden crown, sometimes a lovely turban embroidered with gold and a bejewelled tuft on which shone a plume of feathers. Round his neck were diamonds and rubies.

179. Then a white pearl necklace was put around his neck. All these ornaments and clothes were brilliantly lit up by the lights.

180. On the forehead was drawn a vertical blackline of fragrant musk and as per the tradition among the *Vaishnavas*, a round black *tilak* was also put on the forehead.

181. That purple velvet cloak, fully embroidered with *zari*, was placed on the shoulders; and if it slipped, it was immediately gathered together on both sides.

182. Similarly, the crown or the turban was held aloft over his head and placed gently so that Baba was not aware of it.

183. Whatever it was the crown or the turban, as soon as it touched his head Baba threw it away. Though this was a great anxiety for them, their loving eagerness was very powerful.

184. Did Sai, who knew the innermost thoughts of all, not know of this surreptitous action of the devotees? But considering their love and affection, he deliberately kept quiet.

185. He, who has the glorious splendour of the Realisation of *Brahman*, of what avail is a full-embroidered *zari* cloak and ornaments? Or of what avail is the embellished crown to him who is radiating his inner peace?

186. Even so the devotees adorned Baba with a variety of ornaments and applied a beautiful *tilak* on his forehead mixed with saffron.

187. Some put diamond and pearl necklaces round his neck and some drew *tilak* on his forehead. Thus, the sport of the devotees went on.

188. How wonderful it all looked when the devotees had completed dressing and bedecking Baba, after the crown was on his head and the pearl necklace shone around his neck.

189. Nana Saheb Nimonkar held the white umbrella which moved in a circle on its supporting stick with its pendants and tassels.

190. Bapusaheb washed the Guru's feet with great love. He offered the oblations of water with great devotion and offered *puja* with all the rites.

191. Next he placed a silver dish (platter) with an edge and placed Baba's

feet in it and washed them with great reverence. The hands were cleaned with perfume afterwards.

192. Taking a small bowl of saffron, he applied the fragrant paste to the hands. He offered betel leaf in Baba's palm. Sai looked pleased.

193. When Baba was on his seat, Tatyaba and others kept standing. Holding Baba's hand they helped him to be seated and bowed at his feet respectfully.

194. The *Chavadi*, a pure and holy place, polished like marble, was the meeting place of the old and the young, who were lovingly fastened at Sree's feet.

195. When Baba's lustrous form graced the seat leaning against the bolster, the whisks and fans gently moved on both sides.

196. Madhavrao crumbled the tobacco into powder and immediately prepared the *chillum* and passed it into Tatyaba's hands who took the first puff.

197. After the tobacco was ignited and a flame appeared, Tatyaba placed it in Baba's hands. After Baba's first long pull he gave it to *Bhagat*.

198. Then, in a circle, coming to *Bhagat*, Shama and Tatyaba, from time to time, till it was smoked out.

199. Blessed it was, and how fortunate! We, the living, could not be compared in the service that it rendered, though it was inanimate.

200. Its penance was arduous too! It was treaded upon in its infancy (by the potter); later suffering cold and heat (while drying) and finally, it was baked in the fire.

201. By its destiny it was touched by Baba, then baked again in the *Dhuni*. Afterwards it was anointed with ochre – coloured powder and fragrance. Then it was blessed by the kiss of Baba's lips.

202. Enough! camphor, saffron and sandalwood paste were smeared on both hands of Baba. After putting garlands of flowers around his neck, the devotees offered him nosegays. (small bunches of flowers).

203. He, whose face was ever smiling and who always looked with love and compassion, how could he have any pride at being decked like this? He allowed all this only to show regards for the feelings of the devotees.

204. For him, whose body is adorned with devotion and who is bedecked with ornaments of peace, of what use are these worldly garlands and jewels?

205. Of what use is an emerald necklace for him who is the embodiment

of non-attachment. But, if offered, he inclined his neck to fulfil the desires of the devotees.

206. Glittering garlands of gold, emeralds and pearls shone round his neck. They were made of eight or sixteen rows, mixed with topaz.

207. Garlands of jasmine and basil, that were put round his neck, trailed upto his feet. His neck shone with unprecedented brilliance from the garlands of pearls.

208. Together with the emerald garland studded in gold, there was a gold gorget which hung over Baba's heart. The black *tilak* on the forehead had an enchanting beauty.

209. How can he be called a fakir, who looked like an effulgent descendant of *Vishnu*? Above him were the canopy and the whisks and his head was adorned by the *zari* embroidered cloak.

210. Generally, Jog, with great love, taking the five-wick lamp in his hands would wave it over Baba, in the midst of the din and clamour of the auspicious music of the instruments.

211. After offering the five oblations, together with the *puja*, then taking the abundantly-filled five burning lamps, with *niranjan* and camphor, he waved it round Baba.

212. Then after the *Arati* ended, one by one all the devotees prostrated with eight-fold obeisance, surrendering to Baba and left for their homes.

213. When Tatyaba took Baba's permission to leave for his home, after offering *chillum*, *attar* and rose water, Baba used to say: "Take care of me".

214. "Go if you are going. But during the night from time to time, inquire about me." Saying, "very well", Tatyaji would leave the *Chavadi* and go home.

215. Then when all the people had left Baba would himself untie the bundle and spread the folds of *dhotis*, making his bed with his own hands.

216. Then he himself spread sixty to sixty-five white sheets, one on top of the other, and Baba then slept on them.

217. Here ends the story of the *Chavadi*, as it used to happen. Now the story that still remains will be told in the next chapter.

218. I beg forgiveness from the listeners. As Sai's greatness is unfathomable though I wished to tell it briefly, I could not limit it, for it is all very significant.

219. Now the story of Sai's cooking vessels and whatever other stories

that have been left out will be narrated in the next chapter. Please be reverently attentive.

220. To always remember the Guru, that is the selfish motive of Hemad, to enable him to achieve whatever is desired in this world as also in the other. He can achieve all the four goals of life by prostrating at the feet of the Guru, as they are all contained therein.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the thirty-seventh chapter, of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Description of the Chavadi".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Pair of cymbals.
2. Wooden sticks which are beaten to a rhythm.
3. Drum.
4. Small tambourine.
5. Ring with bits of iron loosely attached and fastened to the top of a staff.
6. Pandanus odoratissimus.

Sai Baba going in a procession to Chavadi

How enjoyable was the celebration! which was nothing but a glorious exposition of love and devotion. The rich and the great gathered to watch the marvel of it! (Ch-37, ovi 168)

Nanasaheb Nimonkar

38

Description of the Cooking and the Vessel

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Obeisance at your feet, *Guruvara*, who have given happiness to the whole world, accomplished the welfare of the devotees and have removed the three-fold afflictions of those who have resorted to your feet.
2. Protector of the humble and the weak, the Supremely Generous, Uplifter of the devotees who have surrendered, you have manifested in the world to oblige the people.
3. Hail, hail to you, destroyer of duality; hail, hail to you, adored one of the devotees; hail, hail to you, the remover of the fear of existence. Hail, *Gururaya*, Cloud of Mercy.
4. What good fortune has borne fruit by which I have seen these feet with my own eyes! And enjoyed the bliss of association! Those days are gone, never to return.
5. The liquid essence of Pure Self was poured into the mould of *Brahman* and out of this has emerged the form of the crest jewel of the saints – Sai.
6. Sai is himself *Atmaram*. He is the abode of perfect divine bliss. Having himself attained all objects of life, he makes his devotees desireless.
7. He who is the supporter of all religions and the devourer, with *Brahmanic* and martial lustre, of death. This is his characteristic in brief.
8. He who breaks the ties of previous birth and death, snapping them angrily, to him I, the dull-witted and the ignorant, bow with eight-fold prostrations.

9. In the last chapter, with great delight, I depicted Sainath's *Chavadi*. Now in this chapter, listen to the description of the cooking and vessel. It will give unalloyed happiness.

10. A suckling child is only interested in feeding, but does not know what to have. Whether it should be given milk or a light morsel – that is the responsibility that the mother takes.

11. Similarly is my mother Sai. He puts the pen in my hand and gets the book written without any efforts on my part, for the delight of his devotees.

12. In the *Shastras*, for the different epochs different means are prescribed for attaining *nirvana*. Penance for the *Krita Yuga*, Knowledge for the *Treta Yuga*, Sacrifice for the *Dwapara Yuga* and Charity for the *Kali Yuga*.

13. Performance of charity and righteous action is always important. Pacifying hunger is the best of all. Therefore, giving food in charity should be done regularly. It takes precedence over all other actions.

14. When it becomes noon, we suffer from the pangs of hunger. Just as we feel, so do others. One who understands this inner feeling is virtuous.

15. According to the code of conduct laid down by the *shastras*, giving food in charity has the first place. When considered, there is nothing greater than that.

16. Food is *Parabrahma*. From food all beings are born; by food lives are sustained and having departed, into food again they enter.

17. When an uninvited guest arrives at any odd time, a householder should make the guest happy with food. Those who send them back hungry invite trouble to themselves.

18. Giving charity of money, property, clothes etc. requires some discrimination; but in the matter of food, no such consideration is necessary. Whoever comes at any time to the door, it is not good to disrespect him.

19. Such is the greatness of giving food in charity that there is evidence of it in the *Shrutis* also. Therefore, Baba too offered food to the people behaving as per long established tradition.

20. Giving money or doing any other charity is imperfect without giving food in charity, as is the constellation of stars without the moon or a necklace without its pendant. Would they look beautiful?

21. Just as *Varan* [1] is the best among the six flavours[2], giving of food in charity is the most meritorious. A spire without a pinnacle does not seem befitting, nor does a lake without lotuses;

22. nor *bhajan* without devotion, nor a married lady without the *kumkum* mark on her forehead, nor singing without a sweet voice which is tedious, nor buttermilk without salt which is tasteless.
23. When offering food, the diseased, the weak, the blind, the crippled and the poor should be served first – the relations and other people afterwards.
24. Now, so that the listeners get a general idea of Baba's cooking vessel, I am making an effort to satisfy those who are curious.
25. In the courtyard of the *Masjid*, he arranged a big hearth on the top of which a huge vessel was placed, with proper measure of water.
26. Sometimes he cooked sweet rice and sometimes *pulao* with mutton. Sometimes he prepared wheat flour dumplings and cooked them in *varan*.
27. Sometimes he made wheat *rogda* [3] or rolled out wheat *panga* [4] and put them in the *varan* that was being cooked, together with the dumplings, very gently.
28. After grinding the spices on a stone slab, he made everything ready for cooking. After preparing the *muga vadi* [5] with his own hands, he slowly put them into the cooking vessel.
29. With the hope of getting a place in heavens, animals are sacrificed as an offering for the *yagna*. Even the brahmins eat the meat after offering [6], as the *shastras* accept this ritual killing.
30. Similarly, Baba invited the *Mulla*[7] to recite Quranic verses before killing the goat in keeping with the religious custom.
31. There were two kinds of cooking vessels – one big and one small. Using one or the other, he would cook for those who needed the food.
32. The small vessel held enough food for fifty persons; the bigger one was large enough to feed hundred persons and have some food left over.
33. For all the requirements, Baba went personally to the grocer and had him draw up the accounts. He paid immediately in cash. There was no question of credit.
34. Salt, chillies, cummin seeds, pepper corns, vegetables, coconut, copra – Baba bought all these personally, after carefully deciding upon the items.
35. Sitting in the *Masjid*, and setting up the grinding-stone with his own hands, Baba would grind there the wheat, the pulses and the millet.

36. Baba did all the main labour for the cooking. Untiringly he did all this. Even the grinding of the spices was done by him, with love.
37. Baba would re-arrange the fire-wood in the hearth, on and oft, as needed to make the flames high or low.
38. After soaking the pulses (*dal*), he would grind them himself on the grinding stone; then mix asafoetida, cummin seeds, coriander and make the dish well spiced and palatable.
39. After well-kneading the wheat dough, coiling it to an adequate length, he would make balls – then roll them out and make several flat unleavened breads.
40. He also used to make *Ambil* in the cooking vessel, by adding adequate quantity of water to millet flour and mixing it with buttermilk, and then cooking it.
41. That *ambil* was also served by Baba to all, with his own hands, along with the food, with great love at that time.
42. After satisfying himself that the food was properly cooked, the vessel would be taken off the fire and brought into the *Masjid* and kept there.
43. After getting the *Maulvi* to say *fateha* over the food, with proper rituals, the *prasad* would be sent to Mhalsapati and Tatya, at first.
44. Then all the remaining food would be distributed by Baba with his own hands to the poor and the weak, till they had their fill and felt contented himself.
45. All those who needed the food savoured it with eagerness till they had their fill. Moreover, Baba urged them to eat more by saying "*take, take*", with love.
46. How great was the merit of those who received this food to their hearts' content, which was served by Baba himself! How fortunate they were!
47. Here, it would be natural to have a doubt whether Baba distributed non-vegetarian food to all the devotees without hesitation.
48. It will take no time to clarify this doubt. He distributed this food only to those who were regular meat eaters.
49. Those who were not accustomed to it in this life were not even allowed to touch it. He never attempted it. He attempted to offer meat only to those who had an earnest craving to get *prasad*.
50. When a Guru gives anything as *prasad*, the disciple who thinks and doubts whether it is acceptable or otherwise, goes to perdition.

51. In order to see how far any disciple had imbibed this principle, Baba proposed tests with humour.
52. In this context, as I write I am reminded of an anecdote which the listeners should hear with attention. It will be beneficial to them.
53. On one Ekadashi day, Baba said to Dada Kelkar: "Will you bring some mutton for me from Korhala?"
54. For that, Sai took out some moneys and gave them to Dada, counting them. "Go yourself", he ordered. "You should yourself do this".
55. His name was Ganesh Damodar and his surname was Kelkar. People knowing him to be elderly, all called him 'Dada'.
56. He was the father-in-law of Hari Vinayak Sathe. He had immense love for Sai. Being a Brahmin he performed the religious duties of a brahmin with reverence and was endowed with good thoughts and had good conduct.
57. Though he served the Guru, day and night, he was not satisfied. Why did he not experience the strangeness of this command?
58. He whose body is sound and has the strength of previous habits, such a person's mind is never fickle and intellect is steady at the feet of the Guru.
59. He knew that offering money, grain and clothes is not the only *dakshina* but implicit obedience to the Guru's orders is the real *dakshina* that pleases the Guru most.
60. He has real faith, who offers his whole being, and ultimately attains the Guru's Grace.
61. Obeying the order, he quickly changed his clothes and set out to go to village, when he was called back.
62. "Oh! You can send someone to make this purchase", Baba said. "You need not take the unnecessary trouble of coming and going yourself".
63. So Dada asked Pandu, the servant, to get the meat. Hear what Baba said to Dada, at that time.
64. When Pandu was about to leave and had started on the way, Baba said: "Let it be for today. Ask him to come back".
65. Be it so. On another occasion, Baba had an intense desire to cook. So he put the large cooking vessel on the hearth and filled it with mutton.
66. He washed the rice and added it to a measured quantity of water. After adding the fire-wood in the hearth, Baba sat there blowing on the fire to make it burn brighter.

67. The whole village owed obedience to him and anyone would have loved to tend the fire but without Baba's order no one dared to do that.
68. For that matter, it was only necessary to give the order and the food would have been cooked and brought. Everyone was ever anxious to serve him but Sai was not interested.
69. It is not correct to say 'he was not interested'. He who desires to cook, why would he trouble others to give food in charity to strangers?
70. For his own sustenance, he asked for alms and roamed from door to door for it asking for just a quarter piece of *bhakri*.
71. But when he himself was desirous of giving food in charity, he was not satisfied till he took the trouble himself and did not depend on anyone else.
72. Baba paid cash and himself brought enough flour, wheat, rice and pulses to feed a hundred persons.
73. Taking the scuttle in his hand, he would go to the grocer's shop and people learnt from him how to do an honest transaction.
74. He would pick up the items in his hand and fixed the price after bargaining. No one could deceive him nor pride himself that he had done so.
75. He eventually paid twice the amount asked for and in cash; but while bargaining, he would not accede to one paise more than the price.
76. He had great desire to do the work himself and he did not like any one else doing it. He did not expect any one's help and did not wish to trouble others.
77. This is one principle that Baba kept before him all the time. Therefore, for the work of cooking, he asked for no one's help.
78. It was not only for cooking. In the room adjacent to the *Dhuni* where the fire-wood was stacked, three fourths of the wall on the eastern side was built by Baba with his own hands.
79. He mixed the mud with water, then taking the trovel in his hand, Baba would lay the bricks one upon the other to build the wall.
80. What else did Baba not do! He smeared the cow dung in the *Masjid* himself; he sewed the *kafni* and the 'langot' himself. He had no expectations of any one else.
81. When the steam came out of the cooking vessel and the contents of the cauldron were fiercely boiling, Baba rolled up his sleeve and

pushing his arm inside churned the whole mass from side to side and up and down.

82. Seeing the vessel bubbling, and in need of stirring, Baba would show this incredible *leela* at such a time.

83. Imagine the hand of flesh and blood and that boiling hot vessel – but there was not a mark of scalding or burning on his hand or any expression of fear on his face.

84. How could that hand, whose touch to the foreheads of the devotees removed their three-fold calamities, be troubled by the fire? Would it not know its greatness?

85. He would spread the soaked *dal* on the grinding stone, would clean it himself, taking the muller in his hand grind it and then make *Moong Vadis* from it.

86. Then he would slowly slip them into the vessel and stirred them to prevent sticking at the bottom of the pot. When cooked, he would take it off the fire and distributed the *prasad* to all.

87. The listeners would question how the *prasad* could be distributed to all when Sai Baba was a Muslim. How could he make the people eat food cooked by him, which would be defiling (for the Hindus) as per their code of behaviour?

88. There is only one answer to this question. Sai was always attentive to the matters relating to conformity or non-conformity to religious matters.

89. Sai never insisted that all the dishes prepared in the cooking vessel should be partaken by everybody, indiscriminately.

90. But he fulfilled the desires of those who wished voluntarily to have that *prasad*, in good faith. He never practised any fraud or deceit.

91. Besides, who knew the caste? Since he stayed in a *Masjid* it was *said* that he was a Muslim. But considering his ways of behaviour none knew to what caste he belonged.

92. Where lies the question of considering the caste of him who is believed to be God; and, at the dust of whose feet refuge has been taken? Their attempt to attain spirituality must be treated scornfully.

93. Where lies the question of knowing the caste of him who is detached from this world and heaven too, and whose only wealth is discretion and detachment? The attempt to attain spirituality by those, who do so, must be treated scornfully.

94. Where lies the question of knowing the caste of him who is beyond the dualities of *Dharma* and *Adharma* and who abides in Pure and

Supreme Bliss? The attempt to attain spirituality by those who do so must be treated scornfully.

95. I sing these stories about Baba's life for my own pleasure. He who intensely desires to hear them, will find his devotion fulfilled.

96. So be it. The episode of this story is incomplete. Let us go back and listen with care to what Baba said to Dada.

97. "I have made *pilaf* (with mutton). Have you seen how it has turned out?" Dada, casually said: "Yes, yes, it is very good indeed".

98. Dada was an old and leading devotee who regularly practised the rituals of bath, prayers etc. and acted in accordance with an ethical code. He did not find this question in order.

99. Baba then said to Dada: "You have never seen it with your eyes, nor have you tasted it! How can you then say it is good?

100. "Oh! Take off the lid of the cooking vessel and feel it with your own hand." Then, taking his hand himself, he thrust it into the pot.

101. Moreover, he said: "Take out your hand. Take a ladle and serve it in a platter. Do not care for your orthodoxy. Do not unnecessarily bluster".

102. The thought that a saint would make a disciple polluted is itself strange, at the outset! The saints are always overflowing with mercy. They know how to behave.

103. When a wave of real love arises, even a mother pinches her child with her own hand; then when the child begins to cry she hugs him close to her bosom.

104. One who liked to eat what was forbidden, his wish was fulfilled. While one who had control over the mind was supported by Sai to refrain from such food.

105. This desire to obey the order (of the Guru) at times reached such heights that those who in their life time had never touched meat, wavered.

106. The reality was that Baba never provoked any one of the devotees to tread on the wrong path.

107. So be it. Until 1910 this business of the cooking went on, on and oft, with great enthusiasm.

108. Thereafter, Das Ganu arrived in Bombay (city), who impressed in the hearts of all the greatness of Sai with his *kirtans*.

109. From then onwards, Baba's greatness came to be known to all, young and old; and countless people thence started going to Shirdi.

110. Then started Baba's *puja* or worship with the five prescribed items[8]

and different varieties of *naivedya*, food and snacks in the noon and later.

111. *Varan*, rice, *sheera-puri*, *chapatis*, chutneys, salads, different kinds of *panchamruts*, *kheers* – heaps of food descended.

112. Pilgrims came in large numbers. One and all came running for *darshan*. They offered *naivedya* at Sai's feet; and those who were hungry were naturally satisfied.

113. Baba was treated and worshipped like a king, with canopies, whisks; the *tal and the ghol* reverberated; the circle of devotees increased.

114. His glory spread everywhere. People sang his praises. Shirdi became a place of pilgrimage later on, very holy for the visitors.

115. Because of this, the main reason for cooking was served. Such large quantities of *naivedya* came that the fakirs and the paupers were satisfied to their hearts' content and a lot of food was left over.

116. Now I will narrate another story which will give you pleasure to listen – how Baba was displeased when disrespect was shown towards any deity or shrine.

117. Drawing inferences, some people said that Sai was a Brahmin and some that he was a Muslim. He was beyond all castes and creeds.

118. No one knew definitely when he was born or where, in what community, or who were his parents. Then, how could he be a Muslim or a Brahmin?

119. If he was a Muslim, how would there be worship of fire in the *Masjid*, or a *Tulsi Vrindavan* there, or how could he have borne the ringing of bells?

120. How would he have permitted the blowing of the conch, the recitation of *katha* and *kirtan* with instruments, the playing of *tal*, ghol, *mridang*, and the loud chanting of the Lord's name?

121. If he was a Muslim, would he allow application of sandal paste and other ritualistic worship while sitting in the *Masjid* and eat with others there?

122. If he was a Muslim, would his ears have been pierced? Would he have renovated and repaired temples by spending his own money?

123. After bath, would he have worn an expensive *pitamber* [9]? He never tolerated the slightest disrespect to any deities.

124. I recall, while writing this, a story illustrating this aspect, which I present very humbly. Listen to it, attentively.

125. See what happened once! Baba returned from the Lendi and sat in the *Masjid*. The devotees began arriving for *darshan*.

126. Amongst them was the great devotee Chandorkar whom Baba loved very much. He came with Biniwale, (his brother-in-law), eager for *darshan*.

127. After doing obeisance to Sainath, both of them sat in front of him. While they were exchanging generalities about the welfare and well-being, Baba suddenly got angry.

128. Baba said : "Nana, how is it that you have forgotten? After having spent such a long time in my company, is this only what you have learnt?

129. Is this the result of the time you have spent in my company? How could your judgement have strayed like this? Tell me in detail".

130. Listening to this Nana became dejected. He wondered about the reason for this anger but could not recall anything. He felt sad.

131. He could not remember where he had erred. He could find no reason for the anger. But unless something had happened Baba would never hurt anybody.

132. Therefore, he clutched Baba's feet and repeatedly entreated him. Finally Nana supplicated earnestly and asked : "Why are you angry?"

133. "Though you have been in association with me for so many years, how could you have acted thus? What happened to your senses?" Baba asked Nana.

134. "When did you come to Kopergaon? What happened on the way? Where did you get down on the way? Or did you come here straight?

135. "Something strange happened on the way. I feel like listening to it in detail. Tell me what happened and where, be it a big or small incident".

136. Hearing this Nana realised his mistake and his face fell immediately. Though he felt ashamed to speak of it, he narrated it.

137. Nothing could be concealed here! Having decided this, Nana told Baba whatever had happened in detail.

138. There could be no lying before Sai. Falsehood does not gain Sai's Grace. Dishonesty leads to destruction and ultimately lies lead one to hell.

139. To deceive the Guru is a very great sin, from which there is no atonement. Realising this Nana described in detail to Baba whatever had happened.

140. Nana said : "We hired a tonga to come straight to Shirdi, as a result of which Biniwale missed the *darshan* of Lord Dutta on the banks of the Godavari.

141. Biniwale is a Dutta devotee. When we came across the Dutta temple on the way, he wanted to get down to have Dutta's *darshan*.
142. But I was in a hurry, so I prevented him and told him that we could take the *darshan* on our return journey from Shirdi.
143. Thus becoming hasty and thinking it would get late to come to Shirdi, I tried to avoid the matter and disregarded Dutta's *darshan*.
144. Later, while bathing in the Godavari, a big thorn pierced my foot and gave me a lot of trouble on the way till I could pull it out with much effort".
145. Then Baba advised: "It is not good to be in such haste. Thank your stars that you had only the thorn to contend with, though you had disrespected the *darshan*.
146. When a very venerated deity like Dutta is on the way, awaiting *darshan*, unfortunate is he is who has not taken the *darshan*! How can I help him?"
147. Let us now end the story about the cooking. How pure and holy was the midday meal in the company of Sai, in the *Masjid* ! How wonderful was Sai's love for the devotees!
148. After the noon *puja* and the daily arati of Baba, when the devotees were about to return, Baba gave *udi* to all.
149. Baba used to come and stand near the wall (edge) of the *Masjid*. The crowd of the devotees stood waiting in the courtyard and each one filed past bowing at his feet.
150. Whoever stood in front of Baba, after having put his head at his feet, was applied *udi* by Sai, on his forehead, at that time, one by one.
151. "Now, all of you, young and old go to your homes to eat". Obeying this order from Baba, whole-heartedly, the people returned.
152. After Baba's back was turned, the curtain (to the *Masjid*) was drawn according to custom. The rattling noise of the platters and the small bowls could then be heard. Then started the splendour of the *prasad*.
153. Many sat in the open courtyard waiting to get the balance of the *naivedya* that was left over, which was made holy by the touch of Sai's hand.
154. At this end, Baba sat near the *nimbar* [10] with his back to it, with two rows of devotees on each side. Every one was immensely happy.
155. Everyone pushed his own *naivedya* in front of Sai *Samartha*, then he put all in one platter with his own hands, collecting it all together.
156. One had to be incredibly fortunate to get even a grain of that food

touched by Baba's hand, eating which purified one from within and without. One's life's mission was achieved.

157. *Vades*[11] (innumerable), *sanjoriya*[12], *puris*, sometimes *shikharini*[13], *gharge*[14], *feni*[15], various vegetables, salads – all were mixed well by Baba.

158. Thus, all this mixed food was offered to God and consecrated. Then he filled the platters high and passed to Shama and Nana (Nimonkar) to distribute.

159. Then calling one by one, he would make him sit near him; and with great joy and love made him eat till he was stuffed.

160. All this food was very palatable on account of the pure, savoury *ghee*. *Chapatis*, pulses would all be mixed. Baba would make this hodge-podge and served everybody.

161. On eating this hodge-podge, made so lovingly, it was equivalent to heavenly bliss. Those who ate ended up licking their fingers, fully contented.

162. Sometimes there were *mandes*[16], *puranpoli*, *puris* mixed with sugar; sometimes *basundi* [17], *sheera*, *sanjoriya*, and *gulvari* [18] – all these were distributed.

163. Sometimes white fluffy rice (a variety, known as *ambemohar*) with *varan*, flavoured with fresh *ghee*, tasty and savoury, surrounded with a variety of vegetables.

164. In addition, there were pickles, *papads and raitas*, different varieties of *bhajis* [19] and *bhartas* [20] – sometimes there was *panchamrut* to which was added curds or buttermilk. Blessed were those who ate such divine food!

165. How can the food be described when Sainath himself is partaking it and distributing it!? The devotees ate to their hearts' content and even belched to show their satisfaction.

166. Every mouthful was satisfying, giving pleasure and nourishment and exitinguishing hunger. Such was this relishable and palatable food which was very holy and given with love.

167. The Lord's name was taken with every mouthful, and *ahutis* [21] were offered of this divine food. The platters never got empty as the food was served, time and again.

168. Those who preferred a particular sweet dish were served it with love, and many liked mango-nectar and they were given that with love.

169. Baba instructed Nanasaheb Nimonkar or Madhavrao Deshpande, everyday, to serve this food.

170. They considered the distribution of the *naivedya* as their regular religious work and performed the task with great love.

171. The rice was the savoury *jiresal* [22], looking like buds of jasmine, on which yellow *tuvar* dal was served, with a rounded spoonful of ghee, to all.

172. As the food was served, the atmosphere was pervaded with the delightful fragrances. Various chutneys added a zing to the food. Nothing was poorly cooked or tasteless. Everyone ate to their hearts' content.

173. That vermicelli in the platters were made of heavenly bliss and the *kurdiyas* [23] were made of love and devotion. Who else but those who experienced peace and joy could come to eat?

174. Where God is food and He himself partakes of it and savours it, blessed are those who serve the food and blessed are those who receive it.

175. The root cause of all this delight was the powerful faith at the Guru's feet. It is not the sugar nor the jaggery that is sweet; but the total faith in the Lord that makes it heavenly.

176. Such was the perpertual prosperity there with abundance of *kheer*, *sheera and kalya* that once one sat down to eat there could be no shilly shallying, even to a small degree.

177. Though a variety of food was cooked and everyone ate to their fill, yet the meal was incomplete without rice and curds, If the rice and curds were not there, at least buttermilk was asked for.

178. Once a glass of pure buttermilk was filled by *Gururaya* with his own hands and given to me to drink, with love. When I put it to my lips,

179. and saw the pure white buttermilk, I was very contented and happy. When I put the glass to my lips, I was full of bliss.

180. Already my stomach was full with the sumptous meal and I was wondering how I could imbibe it. When I had this troublesome doubt, the first sip proved tasty.

181. Seeing me hesitating thus, Baba spoke very earnestly: "Oh, drink all of it! You will not get such an opportunity again!"

182. So be it, I realised the truth of this because two months later Baba's *avatar* was no longer manifest, as he took *samadhi*.

183. Now to quench the thirst for the buttermilk there is no other way than drinking the nectar of Sai's stories – that is our only resort.

184. Hemad surrenders to Sai. I will narrate whatever Sai makes me recall in the future. Listeners should remain attentive.

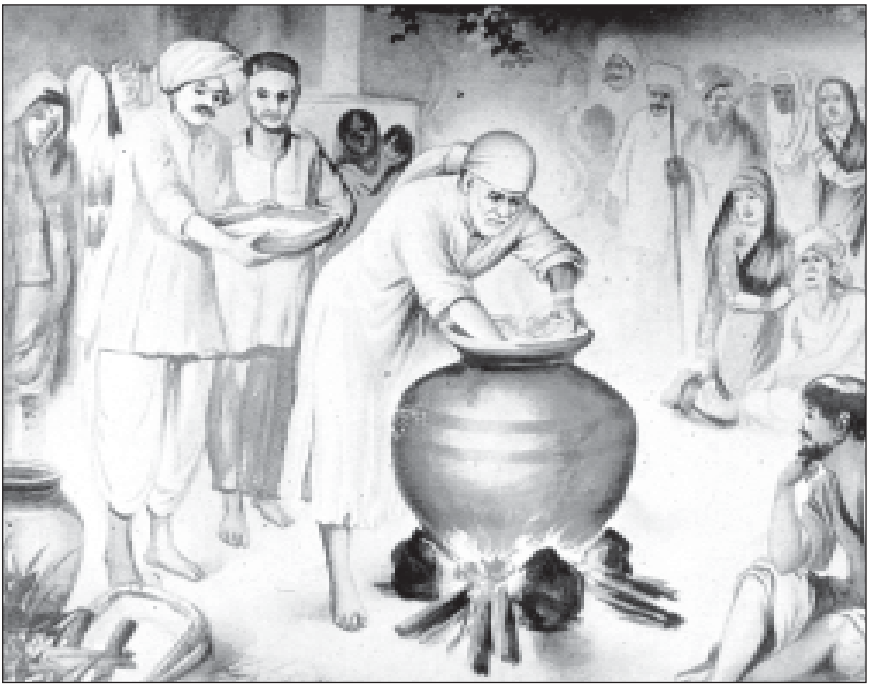
May there be well-being. This is the end of the thirty-eighth chapter, of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Description of the Cooking and the Vessel".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes:

1. Highly tasteful dish of pulses.
2. Sweet, sour, salt, pungent, astringent and bitter.
3. Puffed mass of dough baked on embers.
4. Dough spread over a leaf, rolled and baked over fire.
5. Small, flatish cakes made from phaseolusmango.
6. It is called *purodasha*.
7. Muslim theologian.
8. Milk, curds, honey, sugar and ghee.
9. A *dhoti* of yellow silk.
10. Niche in the western wall of the *Masjid* where the sandalwood paste etc. is applied.
11. Cake made of pulses, ground, spiced and fried.
12. Stuffed cake made out of sheera.
13. Sweet dish made of ripe plantains in milk.
14. Fried pat of wheat or rice, boiled with sugar.
15. Preparation like a *papad*, made out of wheat or rice.
16. Preparation of wheat flour, which was a very thin chappati, slightly sweet.
17. Milk boiled with sugar and suitable spices, thickened to a pudding consistency.
18. Chappatis with jaggery.
19. Gram flour preparation, which is fried.
20. Roasted brinjals.
21. Offerings put into the fire, usually of rice and ghee, with or without sugar.
22. Excellent variety.
23. Preparation made from rice flour, fried in circular swirls.



When the steam came out of the cooking vessel and the contents of the cauldron was fiercely boiling, Baba rolled up his sleeve and pushing his arm inside churned the whole mass from side to side and up and down. (Ch. 38, ovi 81)

Seeing the vessel bubbling, and in need of stirring, Baba would show this incredible 'leela' at such a time. (Ch. 38, ovi 82)

Imagine the hand of flesh and blood and that boiling hot vessel – but there was not a mark of scalding or burning on his hand or any expression of fear on his face! (Ch. 38, ovi 83)

How could that hand, whose touch to the foreheads of the devotees removed their three-fold calamities, be troubled by the fire? Would it not know its greatness? (Ch. 38, ovi 84)

39

The Discourse on the Essence of the Verse of the Gita and the Creation of the Samadhi Mandir

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Twice blessed is Shirdi and blessed is Dwarkamayi, the dwelling place, where Sree Sai the purest one lived amidst all until he left his mortal coil.
2. Twice blessed are the people of Shirdi, for the sake of whom Sai has come from such a long distance, for whatever be the purpose, and obliged them.
3. Shirdi originally was a small village which became important because of Sai who lived there. It became a holy place because of him and a place of pilgrimage.
4. Blessed are the women of that Shirdi and blessed is their singular faith. They sang about the unparalleled glories of Sai while bathing, grinding and chaffing corn.
5. Twice blessed is their love. They sang excellent songs. Listening to some of the best from amongst them, the minds became calm and were pacified.
6. Therefore, for the benefit of the listeners, during the narration, at the opportune time to satisfy their curiosity I shall narrate them so that they are satisfied and contented.
7. Sai appeared first in the dominion of the Nizam, seated under a mango tree near the road and came unexpectedly to Shirdi with the marriage party from Dhoopkheda.
8. From this village a very holy person by the name of Chand Patil was the first one to find this treasure. The others had just the *darshan*.
9. It has been mentioned before how he lost his mare and how he met

Sai who made him smoke the *chillum* and helped him to find the mare.

10. Chandbhai's wife's nephew was to be married and it was destined that his bride would be from Shirdi. The marriage party, therefore, came to the bride's village.

11. The detailed story regarding this has already been narrated earlier. Yet I was reminded of it because of some incidence. But it is not necessary to repeat it.

12. Chand Patil was only an instrument. Sai had an immense desire to uplift the devotees; so he took this *avatar* and, on his own, came to Shirdi.

13. Who but Sai would have uplifted the dull-witted, stupid, the poor and the weak, devoid of education and any spiritual practices – these devoted people who were guileless.

14. From the age of eighteen, he was accustomed to a secluded life. At night, he lay down anywhere fearlessly. He felt that God was all-pervading.

15. During the day he roamed everywhere; and at night he slept in a place where there was a ditch earlier and was now the village's dung heap.

16. Many years passed thus. The time came for a change in the destiny of the ditch and a magnificent mansion was erected over it. It was of Sai, the Compassionate One.

17. Ultimately, that same ditch became the sanctum where Sai's body was given eternal rest and his *Samadhi* was built.

18. That Sai *Samartha*, patron of the poor, in order that the devotees should swim the difficult ocean of worldly existence has rightly created this ship, of his biography, for the benefit of his devotees through this instrument.

19. As this river of worldly existence is very difficult to cross and the dependent devotees are blind and lame for whom he has an intense feeling, he is concerned about how they would cross to the other bank.

20. Each of us has to cross this ocean of existence for which the inner self should be purified. The best means is to purify the mind with the worship of God, as the foundation.

21. There is no greater devotion than listening to his stories. An attachment to the feet of the Guru is easily created by listening. A pure and clean mind is developed by it from which spirituality arises.

22. By narrating the innumerable stories of Sai it will become a big book. Even if I decide to describe them in short, it is impossible to condense them.

23. As the fondness of the listeners increases to hear them, so also does my desire to narrate them. Let us mutually fulfil our wishes and attain our welfare.

24. Sai only is the helmsman and concentrated attention is the boat. Listening to the stories with faith and respect will carry one to the other shore without delay.

25. In the last chapter was the description of the cooking vessel in short; the strengthening of devotion to Lord Dutta (of Chandorkar); and gratifying the desires of the devotees with distribution of the *naivedya*.

26. At the end of every chapter, a hint has been given about the subject of the next chapter; and such has been the arrangement. Everyone is aware of it.

27. But when I ended the last chapter, I had no idea about the topic of the next chapter. So I said that I would narrate whatever Sai made me recall in the future.

28. As I had clearly said, I now narrate what I recall with Sai's grace to the listeners. It is presented with reverence.

29. Therefore, I earnestly request the listeners to push aside all their difficulties and to pay attention with a calm mind. They will be pleased.

30. Once, Chandorkar, the great devotee was sitting in the *Masjid* pressing Baba's feet, while he muttered the *Gita* to himself.

31. He knew by heart the fourth chapter of the *Bhagvad Gita* and used to repeat it, as a habit, while his hands pressed Sai's feet. Now see what a strange thing happened.

32. Sai *Samartha* had the knowledge of everything—the future, the past and the present. He felt like explaining the essence of the *Gita* to Nana.

33. It was the chapter on the *Yoga* of Renunciation of Action in Knowledge; and Nana's indistinct muttering of it which led to the question.

34. "All these end in Knowledge, *Partha* (Arjun)". When the thirty-third verse ended, the next verse started: "By long prostration....."

35. When the thirty-fourth verse started, Nana's recitation came to rest as Baba decided to ask a question and to impress upon Nana his lesson.

36. He said: "Nana, what are you muttering? Speak slowly and clearly whatever you are saying, so that I can hear whatever you are mumbling".

37. When he was asked to recite, obeying the orders, he recited all the four lines of the verse. Then Baba asked him to explain it with all the details.

38. Then, Nana with great humility and with folded hands, happily and in a sweet voice gave his reply, explaining what the Lord (Sree Krishna) had to say.

39. Now, so that everyone should clearly understand the dialogue between Sai and Nana, we shall take the original verse from the Gita quoting word by word.

40. To understand the correct meaning of this question, as also the Saint's mind, this practice should be followed whereby the meaning becomes clear and free of doubts.

41. At the outset, Sanskrit is a difficult language. How did it become easy for Sai to know it to be able to ask such questions in depth? Inconceivable is the knowledge of the saints!

42. When did he study Sanskrit? When did he read the *Gita*, no one knows! Yet he asked questions about the deeper meaning of the *Gita*, as a knowledgeable person.

43. For the satisfaction of the listeners and so that they get the idea of the original verse, I shall give the words of the Lord (Sree Krishna), which will be a great help for the discussion:-

44. *"Tadviddhi pranipatena, pariprashnena sevya. Upadekshyanti te gyanam, gyaninastattva darshinah".*

45. This is the original verse from the *Gita*. See the meaning as per the language. There have been innumerable commentaries upon it, which agree as to its meaning.

46. Nana was well-versed and had deeply studied the *Gita*. He started explaining the meaning of every metric foot of this verse.

47. Nana, in a sweet melodious voice, modestly and humbly, thinking of the natural order of construction of the words, began explaining the meanings, with respect.

48. He said: "Making prostrations at the Guru's feet, giving one's life in the service of the Guru, and questioning the Guru respectfully, then those who have attained the real Knowledge will give instruction of that Knowledge.

49. "In essence, Krishna the Embodiment of Mercy is explaining to

Arjuna with love that service to the Guru and prostrations to the Guru are necessary to attain the Real Knowledge.

50. "Arjuna, if you follow this path, then those who have Real Knowledge will show you the way for the achievement of Knowledge. Baba, this is the meaning that I know".

51. Anandgiri's[1] commentary on *Shankarbhashya*, commentaries of Shankaranand[1] and Shreedhar[1], as also that of Madhusudan, based on Neelakantha – all these are words of advice given by God.

52. Sai *Samartha* accepted the meaning of the first two metric feet, but listen to what he said about the rest.

53. Other devotees, who were eager as *chakor* birds sat looking at Sai's face, which was like the moon, to savour the particles of nectar, with their mouths agape and awe-struck.

54. He said: "Nana, take into consideration the third metric foot, once again. Before the word *gyana* there is a sign of suspension. Bring that into meaning.

55. "Am I saying something which is the opposite of it? Am I twisting the true meaning? Are the earlier commentaries untrue? Do not unnecessarily believe that.

56. "Where you say that philosophers and those who have attained Real Knowledge will give instruction of that Knowledge, if you use the word *Agyan* (ignorance), then you will get the real meaning.

57. "*Gyan* is not a subject matter of words'. How can it be taught? Therefore, take the opposite of the word *Gyan* and then it can be experienced at every step.

58. "I have listened to the meaning that you have given using the word *Gyan*. What do you lose by taking it as *Agyan*? *Agyan* is a subject, that can be discussed. *Gyan* transcends words.

59. "Just as the caul envelops the embryo or dust covers the mirror or ashes cover the embers, so does ignorance cover knowledge.

60. "The Lord has said in the *Gita* [2] that *Gyan* is veiled by *Agyan*. Therefore, when *Agyan* is removed, *Gyan* shines on its own.

61. "*Gyan* shines with its own lustre and is self-effected. It is like pure water covered with moss. The intelligent one, who removes this moss will, find the pure water.

62. "Just as the sun and the moon when they have an eclipse are ever shining and it is only our vision which has been obstructed by the coming in-between by the planets *Rahu* and *Ketu*.

63. "There is no obstacle for the sun and the moon. It is only our

perception which is affected. Similarly *Gyan* is unobstructed. It is self-evident and in its place.

64. "The Power of the inner vision of the eyes is *Gyan*. The veil or the film over it which increases is *Agyan* and it is necessary to dispel it.

65. "That veil or film should be removed with the skill of your hands and the inner vision should be allowed to manifest driving away the darkness of ignorance.

66. "See, the entire visible universe is nothing but a show created by illusion (*Maya*), which is indescribable. This is the same *Maya* which has neither a beginning nor an end, which has neither an appearance nor can it be realised. It is this *Agyan*, which is manifest.

67. "*Gyan* is something which has to be realised and not something that can be taught. To make prostrations, to question respectfully and to serve the Guru are the only means for his Grace.

68. "That the world is real is a great illusion. That is the dark veil over *Gyan*. This has to be dispelled first. Then only, *Brahman* will manifest, which is the greatest *Gyan*.

69. "The root cause of worldly existence is *Agyan*; and when the collyrium of Guru's Grace is put in the eyes, then the veil of *Maya* will be removed and what remains is the Real *Gyan*.

70. "*Gyan* is not to be acquired. It is self-evident from the outset. This is an established fact from the *Veda-shastras*. The real impediment to the acquision of *Gyan* is *Agyan*.

71. "The feeling of duality between God and the devotee is the most extraordinary *Agyan*. When that *Agyan* is dispelled what remains is absolute *Gyan*.

72. "Only the *Agyan* of the pure form of the rope makes us mistake it for a snake. *Agyan* can be dispelled by the teaching of the real form. Then, will remain the *Gyan* of the rope.

73. "When gold is hidden under dirt, it shines only when the impurities are removed. But to make it appear like that, it is necessary to purify it with fire.

74. "The root cause of birth of a being is *Maya*. The being moves according to its fate. The whole concept of duality depends upon fate. The ego about the body is due to *Agyan*.

75. "Therefore, those who are without pride are not affected by pleasure and pain. Those who are detached from the spurting of pride, they have dispelled *Agyan*.

76. Where there is *Agyan* of one's own self, that is the birth-place of

Maya. When, by the grace of the Guru, *Maya* is removed, *Gyan* about the Self is realised.

77. Why should one use other debilitating practices except for devotion to the Lord? Even *Brahmadev* is subject to *Maya* and only devotion frees him.

78. Even if one has attained *Brahmalok*, there is no *Mukti* without devotion. If one forgets devotion there too, one gets back to the cycle of birth and death.

79. Therefore, for *Maya* to be dispelled, the only means is worship of the Lord. A devotee of the Lord has no degradation and is not attached to this worldly existence.

80. People say that *Maya* is false but she is a sorceress, entangling even the knowledge in its net all the time. But a devotee can make *Maya* dance to his tune.

81. Where those who are rich with knowledge are deceived, there the devotees can withstand *Maya*, because they are always surrendered at the feet of the Lord, whereas the knowledgeable are proud of their knowledge.

82. Therefore to overcome *Maya*, take refuge at the *Sadguru*'s feet and whole heartedly surrender to him. The fear of the worldly existence disappears immediately.

83. Let death which is a certainty, come; but do not forget the Lord. The senses may behave according to their nature but the mind should always be meditating on Him.

84. Just as the horses are harnessed to the chariot so is the body to the senses. But hold firmly the reins of the mind with the hand of your intellect.

85. The mind which is full of doubts and delusions runs helter-skelter at its own will. It is the intellect, on its own, which controls it and reins it in with its own powers.

86. When a capable leader like the intellect is the charioteer why would the master of the chariot (or one riding in the chariot) worry? He should perform all his actions with a calm mind.

87. Once the mind is accustomed to leaving all the functions of the body under the control of the intellect, everything happens for one's welfare.

88. If the sense organs begin to enjoy the objects of the senses, it will be a waste of energy and there is a fear of degradation at every step.

89. "Whatever be the so-called pleasures of the five senses ultimately cause nothing but sorrow and the greatest is *Agyan*.

90. "Beguiled by sound, the deer ultimately meets its death. The elephant gets caught by its need for touch, and has to bear the prick of the goad.

91. "Entranced by the beauty of the light, the moth loses its life by burning its body; the fish which savours its food and bites the bait immediately loses its life.

92. "The bee bewitched by the fragrance becomes a prisoner in the lotus. If involvement of just one sense causes so much harm, how fierce would the battle be when all five are involved.

93. "This is the case of the animals on the land, creatures residing in water and the birds. Look at their bad condition. Even the knowledgeable run after the sense pleasures. What else is it but *Agyan*?

94. "If one gets away from sense pleasures by removal of *Agyan*, then one gets happily absorbed in divine contemplation. One would get involved in attainment of self- realisation and would achieve immense happiness.

95. "Let your intellect meditate on the Guru, who is God; let your ears hear his stories; let your mind concentrate on him and let your tongue chant his name.

96. "Let your feet take you to the abode of the Guru; let your nose inhale the fragrance of the flowers that have been offered to him; let your hands touch his feet in obeisance and let your eyes take his *darshan*.

97. "In this manner when employing all the senses for the Lord with love, the state of those devotees is blissful. What else is devotion to God?

98. "In conclusion, remove *Agyan* from its roots. Know that whatever remains is absolute *Gyan*. Such is the intent of the verse which was explained by Sree Krishnarana to Arjun".

99. Nana was, as it is, full of humility. Listening to this sweet clarification, he prostrated at Baba's feet and clasped them with both his hands.

100. Then he earnestly prayed with full faith : "Remove my *Agyan*. Punish my evil pride in an appropriate way.

101. "My *Satvikta* is superficial. But questions and doubts still torment me from within. I cannot bear the least of slights even for a moment. What else is *Agyan*?

102. "Inwardly I have an intense desire to have fame but outwardly, I show an inclination to spirituality. Lust and anger smoulder within. What else is *Agyan* ?

103. "Inwardly I am a doer of all evil actions but make a show of good or correct conduct outwardly. I am most ill-behaved and fallen from virtue. What else is specifically *Agyan* ?

104. "Baba, you are the Cloud of Mercy. Sprinkle on me the water of grace and extinguish this fire of *Agyan*. I will be blessed by that much.

105. "I do not need a discourse on *Gyan*. Remove my unlimited *Agyan*. Keep a merciful eye over me. I will be contented and happy with that".

106. Sai, the embodiment of Love and Cloud of Mercy, making Nana an instrument has discoursed on the Gita thus, for your and my and our sake.

107. Gita is the teaching and sayings of the Lord; therefore know it to be the true scripture. It is eternal. It should never be disregarded.

108. But the scriptures are not relevant to him who is deeply attached to the sense pleasures or to him who is really liberated. They are only meant for those who desire liberation.

109. 'I who am fully absorbed in the senses, when will I be liberated?'— these scriptures are meant only for those desiring liberation and thinking in this manner, so that they are saved.

110. Seeing one's own devotee in such a state, and when the saint feels pity for him, finding some pretext makes known the teaching easily.

111. Look, God or Guru is whole-heartedly concerned about the welfare of the devotee and remains worried about the devotee's well-being. He takes upon himself all the difficulties.

112. Now another short narration about Sai's methods and how he accomplished some work without making any fuss about it.

113. The real reason was never disclosed, whether the work was small or big. The work was completed gradually and there was no mention about it anywhere.

114. When some work arises casually, it should be taken into hand without pondering over its root cause or any indication. On the contrary, there is a creation of confusion.

115. "One who only talks, what will he do? Clouds that thunder, will they rain?" The true significance of this proverb is showed by Sai through experience.

116. Avatars like Baba manifest on this earth for the well-being of others. When their desired mission is finished they merge into That which is not perceptible.

117. We do not know the root cause of our being, where we have come from and where we will go; why we were created and what is the reason for our birth.

118. We live a life as per our own will. Then the time comes for death and all the senses are unable to function. Even then the good thoughts do not come.

119. Even though we watch with our own eyes the wife, son, brother, mother, other loved and dear ones dying, the mind does not have these good thoughts.

120. The saints are not of this nature. They are very aware and have full knowledge of their end and know of the time of their death.

121. Till they are in body, they weary their bodies for their devotees with great love and at the end the place where the body is abandoned is utilised for the benefit of their devotees.

122. Some have their *samadhi* built before leaving the body, so that their body may certainly find quietude at that place.

123. That is how Baba acted. But no one realised it earlier. He got the *Samadhi Mandir* built, in an unique way.

124. There was a very rich man of Nagpur, called Bapusaheb Butti. Baba got the edifice raised by him.

125. Bapusaheb was a great devotee and attached to the feet of Sai. He came often with his family and stayed at Shirdi to serve him.

126. Being devoted at Sai's feet he stayed there on and of, and remaining always obedient to him, he felt like staying always at Shirdi.

127. He felt like buying a small plot of land and constructing a small building to stay there independently.

128. This was how the original seed was sown from which the tree in the form of the temple stands today. This is the visible monument of Sai Maharaj's love for the benefit of his devotees.

129. How this construction came about, what was the nature of the beginning and how it took shape – listen to the whole narration.

130. When Bapusaheb was sleeping once, on the first floor of Dixit *wada*, he got this idea while seeing a wonderful vision.

131. There itself, where Madhavrao was sleeping on one of the beds, he also had the same vision. Both were very surprised.

132. In Bapusaheb's vision Baba was commanding him: "You should build your own wada certainly, with a *Mandir* within it".
133. No sooner than the vision ended, Bapusaheb awakened. Sitting on the bed, he began to recall the whole dream.
134. While he was thus occupied, he heard Madhavrao weeping. Butti loudly called out to him: "Wake up" and this made him fully awake.
135. "Oh, why were you weeping?" When Madhavrao was asked this, he replied: "Listening to Sree's loving words, I could not control my emotions.
136. My throat was choked with great emotion and my eyes were overflowing with tears. I was unable to control my tremendous love and thus I ended weeping".
137. Baba came near me and gave me an explicit order: "Let there be a *wada* with a temple. It will fulfil the desires of all".
138. Bapusaheb was left wondering why both had the same vision. He no longer had any doubts. He decided to act upon it.
139. Butti was rich by birth and had the capability to build the wada with the temple. Madhavrao was just comfortably off; and yet both had the same mission.
140. Their visions agreed. They were brimming with blissful happiness. They drew up a plan and Kaka (Dixit) also approved of it.
141. So be it. The next morning when all the three were near Baba, Baba minutely observed Shama's face as per his usual habit.
142. Shama said "O' Lord! what is this unfathomable sport of yours? You do not even allow us to sleep undisturbed! You make us rave then also".
143. Hearing this, Baba covered both his ears with his hands and said: "I have been here all the time, whatever else one may say".
144. So be it. Then the plan that had been earlier drawn up was placed before Baba for his approval. Baba immediately gave his permission to build the house with the temple.
145. Madhavrao got ready to supervise the work. The basement and the ground floor got ready. Even the well was ready under his direction. The construction work reached this level.
146. On his way to and from the Lendi, while the doors and windows were being fixed, Baba watched with interest and eagerness.
147. Baba would say pointing with his forefinger: "A door should be here; a window there. Here, to the east, have a gallery. It will look nice".
148. Later, due to the law of cause and effect, further work was destined to the credit of Bapusaheb Jog. Therefore, it was entrusted to him.

149. As the work was progressing, Butti got an inspiration that in the innermost space of the building he could instal the image of Murlidhar (Lord Krishna).
150. Though he got this idea, but without knowing Baba's mind Butti never initiated any work without getting the Guru's permission.
151. This was his regular habit. Baba's permission was his creed. There was no work which he started otherwise.
152. Why should there be a division in the middle? What is the need for it? Demolishing the walls from both the sides, the image of the Murlidhar could be installed.
153. Bapusaheb wanted the central hall to be the temple. But he wanted to ask Baba what he felt about it. If he so desired, it should be done without any doubts.
154. Therefore, he said to Madhavrao: "You take Baba's opinion. Then plan further work, as the Lord approves".
155. While Baba was on his usual round and had come near the *wada*, right at the door, listen to what Shamrao asked:
156. "Lord, Bapusaheb says that by demolishing the two walls of the central hall the image of the swarthy Murlidhar could be installed with great love.
157. "Making a square place or platform in the centre, we could have a throne on which Murlidhar could be kept. It will look beautiful.
158. "This is what Bapusaheb is planning but needs your consent. In this way, the temple and the house will be completed quickly".
159. Hearing these words of Shama, Baba happily gave his consent. "After the temple is completed, we will come and live there".
160. Gazing at the *wada*, Baba spoke very sweetly: "After the *wada* is completed, we shall use it for ourselves.
161. We shall be together there; there itself, we shall all play and embrace each other lovingly and enjoy a time of plenty happily".
162. So be it. Then Madhavraoji asked Sree Sai : "If this is the definite permission, then whether this is the auspicious time to begin the foundation work (of that project).
163. Lord, this is a good time, isn't it? Should I bring a coconut to break?" "Break, break," Baba said. So he brought a coconut immediately and broke it.
164. So be it. Later, the central hall was completed and also the square platform for Murlidhar. The statue was also entrusted to be made by a sculptor.
165. Later, there came a time when Baba became seriously ill and death became imminent. The devotees were greatly anxious.

166. Bapusaheb was very restless and wondering, about the future of this *wada*. He did not know what would happen and was, therefore, disturbed.

167. Henceforth would Baba's feet touch this temple (and consecrate it). Would the lakhs of rupees have been spent in vain now that this problem had arisen?

168. 'When Baba is no more, why should there be Murlidhar or a house, why the *wada* or the temple?' Butti was miserable.

169. Later, because of good fortune, when the end came, due to Sai's orders, the *wada* had a great destiny and all were pleased.

170. "Place me in the *wada*." These words of Baba at the time of passing away, when they were uttered by Baba, brought great relief to all.

171. Then the holy remains of Sai's body rested finally in the central hall. The *wada* became the *Samadhi mandir*. Unfathomable is Sai's life!

172. That Butti is blessed and fortunate in whose own house the body of Sree Sai rests, and whose very name is most holy.

173. So be it. I hope that listening to this purifying story has made the listeners happy. Hemad is surrendered to Sainath and may he never be separated from his feet, even for a moment.

174. Whatever happens, good or bad, if only Sai is pleased by my following the righteous path, I will attain my well-being undoubtedly.

175. The story, the narrator and the narration is Sai *Samartha* himself. Who and what is Hemad there? He is merely a pen-name.

176. Further narration that you will hear will be in accordance with my future inspiration. Whatever happens, by and by, why should I be worried about it now?

May there be well-being. This is the end of thirty-ninth chapter, of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Discourse on the Essence of the Verse of the Gita and the Creation of the *Samadhi Mandir*".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. These are learned philosophers, whose commentaries exist on the celebrated work 'Shankarbhashya', which itself is a commentary on Badrayan's 'Vedanta Sutra', which is considered to be one of the three corner stones of Indian philosophy.S
2. Chapter 5 Verse 15.

Samadhi Mandir

Gopal Rao alias Bapusaheb Butti

That Butti is blessed and fortunate
in whose own house the body of
Sree Sai rests, and whose very name
is most holy. (Ch. 39, ovi 172)

40

The Narration of the Udyapan Story

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Blessed, blessed is Sree Sai *Samartha*, who gives instructions in both temporal and spiritual matters through this book to the devotees, fulfilling them; and who has achieved his object.
2. When he places his hand on his head, he immediately transfers his powers and destroys the sense of duality and makes the devotee attain the unattainable.
3. He embraces and holds near his heart those who prostrate themselves before him with no sense of duality and unconditionally surrender to him.
4. The ocean and the river have different names but they are one and the same when they meet each other during the monsoon. Not the slightest difference remains.
5. Similarly, when the devotee whole-heartedly surrenders with faith to the *Sadgurunatha*, then he bestows upon the devotee his own greatness, taking into consideration the true devotion of the devotee.
6. Hail! Hail to you! O' Compassionate One to all the destitute! Supremely loving and uplifter of the devotees! Though you pervade the whole universe, you live independently in Shirdi.
7. I was amazed when I saw you, though a saint with your legs spread out with the grinding stone in-between, grinding wheat, after firmly fixing the peg, and putting in as much grains as possible for grinding.
8. This incident has been the root cause of writing this book. A strong desire then arose that if all such deeds are described all the sins would be destroyed.

9. The Lord Himself would be pleased as He prefers the stories sung of His own devotees or the description of their virtues.
10. Virtuous listeners may have some doubts about this statement having been made without any proof or evidence. Then, they should refer to the *Bhavishyottar Puran*[1] which has been narrated by Tripurari[2].
11. This is all Sai's inspiration. But only to conform to popular custom that he gave his consent for the composition, for the benefit of the devotees.
12. Thereafter, every month, the stories of Sai *Samartha* have been read by the devotee with great love, as published in Sree Sai Leela.
13. It is that Sai only who gives his consent. He is the giver of my intelligence. He is the main kindler of my inspiration. He tells his own stories.
14. Do not have the delusion that Hemad writes this with his own intelligence. Therefore, I earnestly pray to the listeners not to attribute its greatness or fault to me.
15. If there is greatness, it is Sai's. If you find any faults, they are his. I am only Sai's puppet, dancing to his string pulling.
16. The puppeteer holds the strings and he presents the drama as he pleases – colourful or strange. He makes the puppets dance according to the story.
17. Enough of this discussion now. The listeners are anxious, as per their nature, to know what the new story is. Let us sing for them the praises of the Guru and the devotee.
18. At the time of concluding the last chapter I had indicated the thread of the next chapter and borne it in mind. Listen to it, as I remember it.
19. Now listen to this sweet narration with attention of how a devotee lovingly offers food and how Sai is supremely contented.
20. Sai is exactly as caring towards his devotees as a mother is to her nursing child. He comes running wherever you may be. How can one repay his obligation?
21. Listen with a peaceful mind to this story of his being in all the three worlds simultaneously, though residing at Shirdi.
22. Once, the mother of Balasaheb[3], who was a great devotee and was attached to Sai's feet, was devoted to removing the imperfections of her religious observances, undertaken for the welfare of all.

Balasaheb Deo

23. She had performed several religious observances on and oft. The *Udyapan*[4] for all of them, remained to

be done.

24. As soon as a number of vows are completed, it is necessary to do the *Udayapan*. Otherwise one does not have the merit (*punya*) and the vow is incomplete without it.

25. The vows numbered twenty-five or thirty and for their *Udyapan* ceremony, Deo had invited hundred to two hundred brahmins for a meal.

26. So, a day was fixed according to the Hindu calendar to perform the *Udyapan*. Deo wrote to Jog[5] to make a request to Baba.

27. "See, without your presence this *Udyapan* will not be complete. Therefore, accepting this prayer oblige this humble one.

28. "I am a Government servant and work to maintain my family. From those limited means, I do such virtuous deeds as I can, as you know.

29. "As Dahanu is so far away, I am unable to come myself. But I have great hopes that you will accept this invitation".

30. Thus, Bapusaheb Jog read out the letter to Baba completely; and asked him to fulfil Deo's wish in this matter.

31. Baba listened with full attention to this pure-hearted invitation and said : "He who remembers me is always in my mind.

32. "I need no conveyance – a carriage, or a horse, a plane or a train. I appear without an instant's delay, when I am lovingly called.

33. "Write to him that you, I and a third person will all three, go together. The writer will be pleased".

34. So be it. Jog communicated to Deo whatever Baba had said. Deo was very pleased, knowing that Baba's words were always true.

35. Deo had full faith now that Baba would certainly come. But when he would experience it, it would be a golden day.

36. But Deo was also fully aware that besides Shirdi, there were only three villages where Baba rarely went. He used to remain at Shirdi always.

37. If he felt like it, once in six months or so, Baba sometimes went to Rahata[6] or Rui[6] or Nimgaon[6]. Otherwise he lived always at Shirdi.

38. As he did not go to anyone, except in these villages, then how would he come to such a far away place as Dahanu, to me?

39. But he was Lord Vishnu incarnate and could go wherever he pleased. This travelling is only for the people of the world. He abided fully, within and without.

40. Coming here from there or going there from here – even the sky would not know about it, as he was complete and all pervasive.

41. Similarly, Baba's movements were impossible to understand. All that is movable and immovable is filled by him. Then, where is the question of coming and going for him? He manifests at his will.

42. So be it. Approximately a month prior to this, a *Sanyasi* came to the station master at Dahanu station, for his own work.

43. He was a canvasser for the institution of protection of cows and a volunteer for the institution. He had come to ask for donations to improve the financial condition of the institution.

44. From his dress, he appeared to be a Bengali. The station master suggested to him to go to the town where he would be taken care of well.

45. "There is a Mamlatdar there. Apprise him of this idea. You will meet rich people there who will give a helping hand.

46. "Once the Mamlatdar is convinced, money will be collected in no time for this religious work. Go there without any hesitation".

47. As the station master was speaking thus inside, the horse's hooves could be heard outside. The Mamlatdar himself had come. He alighted and went into the station.

48. When he entered the room to meet the station master, the master said to the *Sanyasi* : "The Mamlatdar himself has come here!

49. "Now, tell him what you wish. By good fortune, you have met him easily". Then the Sanyasi began to tell him what he had in mind.

50. Then both of them came out and sat down on a wooden box. The *Sanyasi* pleaded with Deo to accomplish the work.

51. "Unless you decide to take into your hands the sacred and religious work of protection of cows, can a stranger like me achieve even a little bit.

52. "You are an officer of this *Taluka*, whereas I am a penniless person going from door to door to relieve the hunger of the cows.

53. "If you put in a word only, my work will be completed quickly. You will get the blessings of the mother cows and you will get name and fame, certainly".

54. After hearing the *Sanyasi*'s request, Deo replied to him : "A collection has just been started in the town for another cause.

55. "Rao Saheb Narottam Shetti, who is a philanthropist and a leading and active citizen, has started a collection.

56. "Therefore, tell me how it would be possible for you to start a

collection? This is not an appropriate time. We will see about it later.

57. "Therefore, after waiting for two or four months come again to this town. Then we shall see what could be done at that time. This is not the proper time".
58. So be it. He left from there. A month must have passed since then when he returned to Dahanu, seated in a *tonga*.
59. Advocate Paranjpe's house was in front of Deo's house. After the *tonga* stopped there, he saw the Sanyasi getting down.
60. "Isn't he the same person, certainly who had come earlier to make a collection?", said Deo to his son, not being sure.
61. "When not even a month has passed, why has he come here? Did he forget our earlier talk?" This was what he suspected.
62. He left off the *tonga* there and spent some time there itself. Then, he came to Deo's house, and began to say:
63. "I am in no hurry to get the money", when he saw that the time was around 10 a.m., when it was time for the meal for the Brahmins to start, and the confusion in which Deo was.
64. "I have not come for money. To-day, I need food". Deo replied "Come, with pleasure! Consider this your own house".
65. Just then the *Sanyasi* said: "My two children are with me". "That's very good", replied Deo to him.
66. As there was some time for the meal to be served, therefore, Deo asked him: "Where have you put up so that I may send for you there".
67. "What is the need for that? When should I come? Tell me at what hour I should be present. I will come when you ask me," the *Sanyasi* said.
68. "Alright, come with the children at 12 o'clock and partake of the meal, holy one!" This is what Deo said to him.
69. So be it. Then the *Sanyasi* left and came exactly at 12 o'clock. The three of them sat down for the meal and ate to their hearts' content.
70. After the food was ready, the Brahmins sat down in rows. The host took good care of the *Sanyasi* and his family.
71. The *Sanyasi* had come on his own with two people. But because of his earlier purpose, a veil of illusion was spread.
72. That is why Deo felt that an *atithi* had come for a meal. But he had a feeling that he wanted money and that feeling was strengthened.
73. In this way, the meal was over. The Brahmins took the water in their

palms, and sipped it and drank cool and fragrant water. They also partook of betelnut etc. (as a mouth-cleanser) after the meal.

74. According to custom, Deo offered with great reverence and pleasure flowers, sandalwood paste, betel leaf, *attar* and rose water to all.

75. So be it. After all this was over, the assembled group left for their homes. The *Sanyasi* also with his family, returned to his own place.

76. Though unexpected and uninvited they had come at the right time and eaten. But Deo did not think it was Baba. He was doubtful.

77. Though it had happened that three people had come unexpectedly and been served by himself, Deo was still doubtful. So he asked Jog for proof.

78. So after the *Udyapan*, Deo wrote a letter to Jog : "How could Baba deceive like this? Is it correct for him to speak so?

79. "You were also supposed to come with him. His words can never be untrue. If you had come there would have been some proof. Now how can I believe it?

80. "Then why has this happened? Why was I so disappointed? I waited most intently. But I had no experience.

81. "I invited Baba, full of love and he said he would come to me, who is surrendered to him. But something different happened. I do not understand how all this took place.

82. "In consideration of my dependent position, I had written a letter with great entreaty. Then, learning that Baba would come, I felt I was greatly blessed.

83. "I knew he would come in any form and under any pretext. But why did nothing of the sort happen? I am greatly perplexed."

84. Jog laid at Sai's feet the whole happening as narrated by Deo. Baba, looking totally surprised, said to him.

85. "Before you opened the letter all that is explained in it has been known to me — even before it was read. What is written stands before my eyes very clearly.

86. "He says that I promised to come but deceived him with my words. Tell him that he did not recognise me. Then why did he invite me?

87. "I did not move from here, as the world perceives. But, I had the food at the *Udyapan*. I had said I would come with two more persons. Accordingly, I went with two others.

88. "There was some time for lunch, when I had come alone, with time at my disposal. Don't you remember the attire of the *Sanyasi* when I first entered.

89. "Seeing that I had come unexpectedly, did you not fear that I would ask for money? And did I not remove your doubt?
90. "I will come only to eat along with two others, I had said. And did I not eat, at the right time, with two more?
91. "Bear it in mind that I would even give my life to keep my words. But the words spoken by me will never be untrue".
92. When Sainatha said so, Jog could not contain his joy. Whatever was promised would never be untrue. This was everyone's experience always.
93. Later on, this information was conveyed by Jog to Deo. He sent him a detailed letter in a very happy frame of mind.
94. When Deo read the letter, his eyes overflowed with tears of love. He reproached himself for having unnecessarily blamed Sai and felt very dispirited.
95. "Blessed is Baba's greatness! And useless is my egoistic power of perception! But I do not understand how I was to conclude that Baba was the *Sanyasi*?
96. "Because he had come for the first time even before Baba had been invited, for his own work of raising donations, and had then met me.
97. "I had asked him to come back after two or four months. If he then came asking for food, how was I to deduce that it was Baba?
98. "Only the words of Baba that he would come for the meal with two others were forgotten by me.
99. "If I had seen him for the first time after having invited Baba, and that too only for the food, I would not have been so beguiled.
100. "But he came under the pretext of cow protection and to raise funds for their welfare. Thereafter, the invitation had been sent to Sai for *udyapan*.
101. "Therefore, this confusion occurred because of which all this took place. Though he came with two others and ate, I took him to be one just desirous of food.
102. "If I had not met him earlier, and he had come unexpectedly at the time of the meal with any two persons, I would have known him to be Sai definitely".
103. But these are the ways of the Saints! Their *leelas* are unfathomable and their deeds marvellous! They themselves plan the functions in their devotees homes even before the devotees know of it.
104. When the devotee is humbly surrendered at his feet, the execution

of his auspicious work is accomplished without his knowledge. Inconceivable are the deeds of the Saints!

105. *Chintamani* grants what is desired; the *Kalpavraksh* fulfils the wishes; the *Kamadhenu* gives birth to desires; but the *Gurumai* grants even the unexpected.

106. Be it so. In this instance, Baba appeared as a *Sanyasi* when he was invited. But his *leelas* are unprecedented. Sometimes he appears uninvited.

107. Sometimes he appeared in the form of a photograph; sometimes he appeared as an idol. There is no limit to his favours. He appeared on his own volition.

108. Listeners will be amazed to hear my own experience, in this connection. They will understand the power of Sai's *leelas*. This story is unprecedented and novel.

109. Some may call it a religious experience or some may call it a story. Call it what you will, but listen to it with reverence.

110. Leaving aside sleep and tiredness, and becoming fully alert, listen to this story. Grant me this wish. I will be satisfied.

111. Cast away disquietude for a while. Listen with a calm and undisturbed mind and it will prove useful. Later you can meditate upon it.

112. Then, onwards, it will be self-realisation. But it all depends upon how you listen. This is the sum and substance. You will then cross the ocean of existence.

113. In the year 1917, on the *Purnima* day of *Phalgun* , when I was sleeping on my bed, I had a dream early in the morning.

114. Behold Sai's deeds! Dressed in beautiful clothes, as a *Sanyasi*, he gave me *darshan* and woke me up. He said: "I will be coming for lunch today".

115. His waking me up was also part of the dream, because when I really woke up I began to recall the dream.

116. When I opened the eyes and began to look, there was no Sai nor anyone else there. It was only a dream a while back and I had not been awake.

117. When I was sure about it, I began to recall the dream. I remembered it word for word, without forgetting anything at all.

118. "I will be coming for lunch today". Hearing these clear words from Sai, I was filled with joy. I told my wife about it.

119. It has always been my practice to think and meditate upon Sai.

Though I have been associated with him for seven years, I never expected him to come for a meal.

120. So be it. I told her (my wife): "Today is the *Holi* festival. Put an extra quarter *seer* of rice to boil. Do not forget".

121. When I told her this, she began to ask the reason behind my instructions. I told her: "Today being a festival, a guest would be coming for lunch".

122. Then she asked: "Who is coming?" as she could not contain her curiosity. But if I disclosed the real reason, I feared, I would be laughed at.

123. Though I knew this fully well, I did not wish to delude her. Therefore, with full faith I told her the truth.

124. But all this depends upon faith, and however one feels within, whether true or not, depends upon one's mind.

125. However much I tried to convince her, she could not accept it. She said: "Why should Baba come so far from Shirdi?

126. "What is the food here? And what celebrations are we going to have for *Holi* ? Leaving aside the dainty food of Shirdi, will he be coming to eat our coarse food?"

127. Hearing these arguments from her, I said: "What is the difficulty in cooking a little more rice? You will not lose anything!

128. "I am not saying that Sai himself will come as a guest. I would not say that myself to you. But some one or the other will come. I have no doubt about it.

129. "You may consider it in any way but I will treat him as Sai himself and none else but Sai. Otherwise my dream will be meaningless".

130. So be it. After this discussion, when it was noon and the *Holika* worship was finished with all rituals, the leaf plates were laid out for the lunch.

131. All the family members – sons, grandsons, daughters, sons-in-law, friends and relatives had come and sat down in rows, back to back. The place was decorated with variegated *rangoli*.

132. In the main row, a seat was kept in the centre in the place of honour for Sai, to be served with the others.

133. Around the leaf plates, there was a decoration of *rangoli* with blue and other colours. Every one had a pot of water, a cylindrical vessel for drinking water, a small spoon placed near them.

134. A lot of preparations had been made — *papad*, *sandge*, salads, pickles, *raita*, different vegetables, *kheers* etc.

135. Seeing that it was twelve noon, the guests wore the *sovala* and one by one took their seats. But no one else came.

136. All the leaf plates were filled with the rice, *poli* and *varan*, except for the central leaf plate, or place of honour, which was empty. Otherwise, there was no dearth of anything at that place.

137. I knew that some guest or unexpected visitor would come, so I waited for the arrival. But I began to wonder how long I should wait.

138. Therefore, the door was locked and chained. *Ghee* (*anna-shuddhi*) was immediately served. Lord *Vaishwadev* (fire) was made a formal offering of *naivedya* and the lunch was about to begin.

139. Just at the time of *Pran-ahuti* [7] footsteps were heard on the stairs and someone called out: "Where is Raosaheb?" All the invitees sat quietly.

140. Then I immediately went to the door as I realised someone had come. As I slowly unchained the door, I saw two persons at the stairs.

141. One of them was Alli Mohammed and the other was a disciple of Saint Maulana, by the name of Ismu Mujavar. They both seemed to be very happy.

142. Seeing all the people who had sat down for the meal and the preparations, Alli apologised: "Forgive me for having troubled you.

143. "It seems that you have got up from your lunch and come quickly for my sake. And, for your sake the others have also stopped and are waiting.

144. "Yet, please take this article. Then when I meet you at leisure, I will relate the marvel of it in details. It is a strange story".

145. Speaking thus, Ali took out a packet from under his arm, and placing it on the table, began to unwrap it.

146. When the wrapping of the newspaper was removed, it revealed a picture of Sai immediately. He said: "Keep this yourself. Please accept my request".

147. Seeing Baba's picture, I got goose pimples and I placed my head at his feet. I was choked with emotion.

148. I felt that this was a great miracle. This was a strange *leela* of Sai. I felt blessed by this action of his.

149. I became strongly curious. "From where did you get this picture?" He replied: "I purchased it from a shop".

150. Later on, both of them did not wait even for a moment. They said: "We are leaving now. You please eat your lunch undisturbed.

151. "If at this moment I begin to narrate the reason behind this, it will unnecessarily delay the lunch of all who have gathered. I will relate it to you later on".
152. I also agreed with them. I was very happy that the picture had come in time and I became occupied with it. I expressed my gratitude to them.
153. "Alright, good-bye". "We will later tell you why the picture has come here. There is no need to do it right now".
154. So be it. After they left, the picture was placed on the central seat which had been set aside for Sai.
155. Everyone was happy. Inscrutable are the ways of Sai. He made his words in the dream come true by coming in the form of this picture.
156. All the people, who were expecting the arrival of a guest to join them for lunch, were surprised.
157. Seeing the beautiful image in the picture, everyone was supremely delighted. Everyone was surprised by the unimaginable way in which all this had happened.
158. After placing the picture on the central seat, and doing full ritualistic *puja*, *naivedya* was offered with loving devotion. Then everyone started their meal.
159. From then onwards, till this day, on every *Holi* day, the tradition is carried on with all rituals and *pujas*.
160. This picture is also worshipped, at the family altar, along with other deities. In this manner Sai showed his actions to his devotees, at every step.
161. So be it. Later on, both these people postponed meeting me and nine years passed thus; and yet, I did not meet them.
162. As last, by chance, I met Alli Mohammed. In fact, I met him as I was casually walking.
163. No sooner than I met him that I became eager to ask him about the marvel of the picture. "Why were you silent all these years and have not said anything?
164. We are meeting to-day as unexpectedly as on the other day. The opportune time has now come. Tell me that wonderful story completely.
165. You also are a devotee of Sree Sai. I know it very well. But that day why did you feel it proper to come all of a sudden?"
166. Then that Alli described the incident. He said ; "Listen, I will tell

you the whole story. See how wonderful is Sai's *leela*. It is full of surprises.

167. "What is the meaning of this *leela*? What was his purpose and what was the covert purpose for the devotees? Sai alone knows it well.

168. "We can only listen to each *leela* or sing about them, knowing them to give happiness certainly".

169. So be it. The further narration will be told in the next chapter. The assembly of devotees will be happy to listen to the infallible story of Sai.

170. Sai, who is the Cloud of Bliss and who has no malice towards anyone, worship him always and ceaselessly. You will attain happiness and contentment; and the mind will be free of desires.

171. The *Chatak* makes a request for its own self but the clouds benefit the whole earth. Similarly, Balasaheb invited Baba; but Baba invites all the devotees.

172. The listeners also sit together with the devotees, in a row and hear the *udyapan* story lovingly. They enjoy the pleasure of association with Sai and belch with contentment.

173. How he comes uninvited; how he appears in physical form; how he obliges his devotees and how he awakens them at every step.

174. So be it. Hemad surrenders at the feet of Sai. The next chapter will be the continuation of the same story. Sai will himself arrange to have the full narration done.

175. It is because of Sai's sacred credo that he protects those that have surrendered to him that Hemad embraces his feet and he will not drive him away.

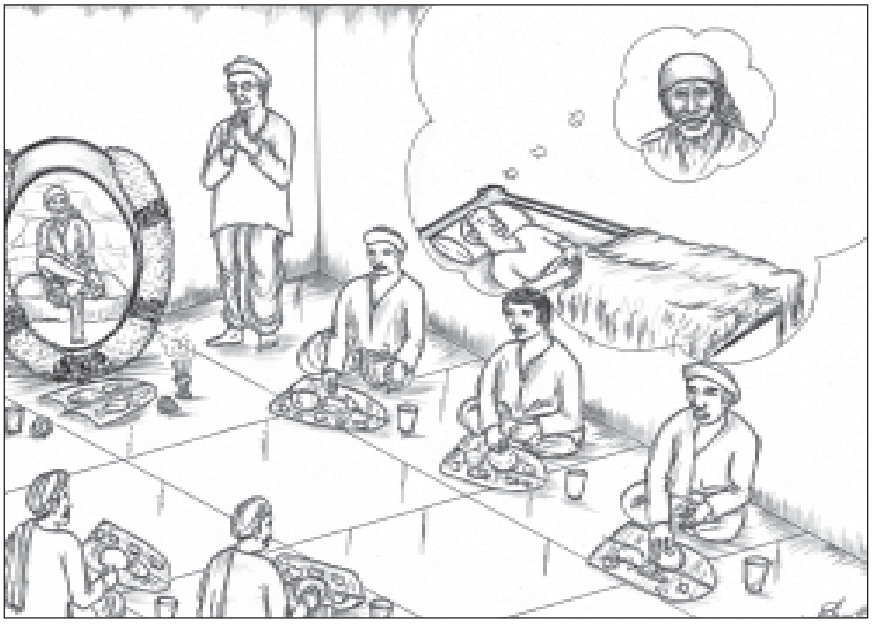
May there be well-being. This is the end of the fortieth chapter, of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Narration of the *Udyapan* Story".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Predicting future events.
2. Tripur was a demon who was killed by Shankar; hence Shiva is so called.
3. Balasaheb Deo, the *Mamlatdar* of Dahanu.
4. The concluding ceremony for religious observance.
5. Sakharam Hari Jog.
6. These three villages are at a distance of two or three miles from Shirdi.
7. Oblation to the five *pranas* done at the beginning of meals.



"I will be coming for lunch today". Hearing these clear words from Sai I was filled with joy. I told my wife about it. (Ch. 40, ovi 118)

I knew that some guest or unexpected visitor would come, so I waited for the arrival. But I began to wonder how long I should wait. (Ch. 40, ovi 137)

Just at the time of *Pran-ahuti* [7] footsteps were heard on the stairs and someone called out "where is Raosaheb?" All the invitees sat quietly. (Ch. 40, ovi 139)

Then I immediately went to the door as I realised someone had come. As I slowly unchained the door, I saw two persons at the stairs. (Ch. 40, ovi 140)

Speaking thus, Ali took out a packet from under his arm, and placing it on the table, began to unwrap it. (Ch. 40, ovi 145)

Seeing Baba's picture, I got goose pimples and I placed my head at his feet. I was choked with emotion. (Ch. 40, ovi 147)

41

The Bestowal of Sai's Grace and Favour

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. This is the greatness of the stories of Sai. However much one hears them, there is no need for encouragement. The listeners themselves remember how the earlier story ended and remain very attentive to listen.
2. Where is the need of asking the listeners to pay attention to the story when they are already eager to listen with concentrated mind?
3. While singing the greatness of one's own Guru and listening about him, the mind will be purified. The repetition of his name with steady concentration, will result in the manifestation of the embodiment of bliss.
4. In the previous chapter was narrated how the *udyapan* of a vow was completed, according to the rituals, along with the indication of the reality of the dream (to Hemad).
5. Similarly, how Sai's picture arrived unexpectedly through someone and how it fulfilled my desire at the right time. Hear the story of that now.
6. On one *Holi* festival, Sai gave me a dream stating that he would come for a meal and how he fulfilled my desire.
7. I have already told that story in detail. But the marvel of how that picture came on time – listen to that today with respect.
8. The story was told by Alli Mohammed which I felt was greatly amazing. This was also evidently a *leela* which was very amusing.
9. It was he, who on that *Holi* day, just as we were sitting down for lunch in the afternoon, who brought it and made me joyous.
10. This is the reference to the earlier story. Now, listeners please hear the further narration attentively of Sai's holy story.

11. This entire story is excellent. The listeners are already attentive. The narrator is humble at the feet of Sai. Sai's story is unfathomable.
12. He was the very embodiment of benevolence. He wore out his body for that purpose. His nature was such that he had no enmity towards anyone and he always engaged in doing good deeds.
13. Whatever be the condition, good or bad, the body must do its duties as destined. But introvert your senses towards the Guru's feet with all the love.
14. Then, with excellent experience, observe how the Guru takes care of the welfare of his devotee, ceaselessly, with love for the Guru in your heart.
15. This state cannot be had for the asking. But what cannot be attained with great effort can come on its own with the worship of the Guru and with Guru's grace, easily.
16. Those who came to closely observe and with pride, they also returned leaving behind their ego deriving happiness from the pleasure of the *darshan*.
17. Sai had all the six great attributes which are the adornment of God – glory, wealth, munificence, knowledge, peace and detachment.
18. How great is our good fortune that Sai, the Cloud of Pure Consciousness, gives us *darshan* without worship, *puja* or other rituals.
19. It is said that "God resides where there is devotion". There is a lack of devotion within us, but this Sai, the great Saint has a compassionate nature towards the miserable.
20. So, now listen to the story which Alli told with attention. You will understand the profoundity of Sai's *leela* and his powers.
21. One day while I was walking along a street in Bombay, I saw a shopkeeper who had pleasing pictures and portraits.
22. There were beautiful pictures of all kinds – of Saints, *Mahants* and *Aulias*. Looking at them, I was confused as to which I should see.
23. Then seeing one at a time, I liked this picture which was more pleasing than the others and moreover was of the one that I worshipped.
24. I already loved Sai. Seeing his picture in front of me, I felt like buying it immediately. So I paid cash for it.
25. Then I brought that picture home and hung it on a wall. I daily had *darshan* of it with joy, as I loved Baba greatly.
26. Three months before I gave it to you, I was not well and had gone to live with my sister's husband.

27. Noor Mohammed Peerbhoy was my brother-in-law. My leg was swollen and I had been operated upon.
28. As I was suffering on account of it, I stayed there three months. There was no one at my home during that period.
29. But the well-known Baba Abdul Rahiman, Moulana Saheb Mohammed Hussain, Baba Sai, Tajuddin Baba were in that home.
30. The pictures of all these and others were hanging on the wall, beautifying my home. But destiny did not leave them also.
31. Here I was in this state and even the pictures were caught in the bad period of Saturn for seven and a half years! I think that whatever has been created will face destruction inevitably.
32. This being the case, how Sai alone became an exception no one has been able to explain to me till this day.
33. When you listen to the whole story about this you will be amazed. You will understand Sai's onenes with the movable and immovable. His powers are inconceivable.
34. A small picture of Saint Baba Abdul Rahiman was with Mohamed Hussain, who was known as Thariya.
35. Many years ago he had given me a copy of it, which I gave to my brother-in-law, as he was his devotee.
36. It was lying for about eight years in the drawer of his table. When he came across it unexpectedly once, he took it to a photographer's shop in Bombay.
37. He enlarged the photograph to match the life-size Baba Abdul, so that he could take it as a gift for him, so that he would be filled with love.
38. He made some more copies and gave them all to friends and relatives, out of which he gave me one too and I hung it on the wall.
39. Then this extremely beautiful picture, Noor Mohamed became anxious to present it to Abdul Rahiman, when that Saint had many people assembled around him, with reverence.
40. Abdul Rahiman, on seeing the picture and realising his intentions, became extremely angry and got up to beat him.
41. Abusing him and treating him with indignity, he sent him away. Because of this, he became very dejected and it created a lot of anxiety.
42. He felt humbled, impoverished, sad and dejected. Not only had he lost a lot of money but also the Guru's grace. A difficulty had arisen.

43. 'Till this day I was endowed with the Guru's favours. But the same me has now become the cause of his anger'. Thinking thus and being in doubts, he began to immerse the pictures.
44. He said: 'From now onwards I will not keep the pictures of Saints in my home. I have lost my Guru's love because of them. Why should I do this work without any fulfilment?'
45. Further he said: 'If my Guru is annoyed with me because of this picture, it will get me into difficulties some time or the other. It is of no use to me.
46. 'This is also image worship, which my Guru disapproves. Then why displease him? What is the purpose of this picture for me?
47. 'A lot of expenditure has been incurred for collecting these pictures. But there is no alternative than to immerse them'.
48. Therefore, my brother-in-law thereafter carrying that picture himself went to the dock to immerse it, refusing to give it to anyone who asked for it.
49. He went right upto Appollo Bunder, hired a boat, went as far as he could in the sea, and finally immersed it.
50. So be it. He did not stop at that. He did the same thing at Bandra. He persuaded all friends and relatives to return the copies of the photo to him.
51. He said: 'Abdul Baba is angry. All those who have the photographs must return them, as they have to be immersed'. He requested all in this manner.
52. The one that was given to me too was taken back, also my brother's; and my sister's was also snatched away. In all, he got back six copies.
53. Then after taking all the six copies to the seashore at Bandra, at land's end, he arrived there with anger.
54. Calling a fisherman, he entrusted all the pictures to him to immerse them in the sea waters.
55. At that time, I was ill and suffering and was at his home. He gave me the same advice and said : 'These pictures bring difficulties.
56. 'Therefore, when you collect all of them and immerse them in the sea, only then will you be freed from your sufferings. Know that certainly'.
57. Then I too called my *munim* (manager), handed over the key (of the house) to him and got all the pictures of the Saints; and handed them over to my brother-in-law to do the needful.

58. He called his gardener and asked him to immerse them immediately in the sea near the temple of Chimbai.
59. Two months after this, when I felt better and returned to my home, I was greatly surprised.
60. On the wall facing the door was hanging in its place the picture (of Sai) which I gave to you. Seeing it, I was greatly astonished.
61. How had the *munim* left this picture behind when he had brought all the pictures? So I immediately removed it and hid it in the cupboard.
62. I was afraid that if my brother-in-law saw it, he would immediately take it for an immersion into the sea.
63. It should not be kept in the house. No sooner than my brother-in-law would see it he would immerse it, with his own hands. Nor could I give it, with my mind free from doubts or suspicion to anyone else, who may not have been a devotee.
64. If I gave it to anyone without proper thought and it was not properly taken care of, I would always regret it and it would be a life long anxiety for me.
65. Therefore, I had to find a proper place wherever it would be safe – someone who would keep it at his home properly. I should hand it over to such a person.
66. When I was in this dilemma it seemed that Sai himself gave me a good idea to go to the Moulana's *durbar*. And I told the problem to Isamusa.
67. So I immediately went to Pir Maulana's *durbar* and told the whole story to the *Mujavar* Isamusa with respect, when he was alone.
68. We both came to the conclusion that it would be safe with you. Therefore, that same day both of us decided to act upon it.
69. This picture of *Samartha* Sai should be kept with you only. We should ourselves hand it over to you and then only it would be safe.
70. So, according to our firm decision, we presented the picture to you with reverence. But seeing that the lunch was about to be served, I returned hurriedly.
71. You did not have the time to listen to this long story at that time. So I decided to narrate it to you at leisure, and with that intention left.
72. It got postponed day after day, and nine years passed away. Today we have both met again unexpectedly".

73. With this narration I was reminded about the earlier background. I related to him the marvel of my dream and the connection between the two was marvellous. Isn't this *leela* wonderful?

74. Now listen attentively to another story, about how Sai lovingly took care of his loving devotees.

75. Sai is very fond of those who have true love for spirituality. Removing all their difficulties, he enjoins them to bliss.

76. Balasaheb Deo had an interesting experience of this kind in fulfilling his vow. His wish was fulfilled and he was enjoined to *bhakti*.

77. There was no way out except to do service during the day for his livelihood. But at night, why should there be obstruction in his exertions for spirituality?

78. He had the desire since a long time to regularly read the *Dñyaneshwari*. But due to some difficulty or the other, he was not able to do so.

79. Just as he read one chapter of the *Gita* every day he wanted to read one chapter of the *Dñynaneshwari* but he could not do so without interruption.

80. When he undertook the reading of any other religious book, he could do so regularly; but as for the *Dñyaneshwari* which he greatly loved, it eluded him.

81. Once Deo took leave for three months to first go to Shirdi and then to his home at Poud for rest.

82. What happened there? There also he read other religious books regularly but his wish for *Dñyaneshwari* was unfulfilled as the opportune time did not come.

83. Whenever he took up the *Dñyaneshwai*, some doubts arose in his mind. So his reading became superficial and he could not create love for it.

84. What is the point in being distressed when he could not succeed in his resolution? He could not read even five stanzas every day.

85. He made a decision to read five stanzas every day. "I could not even do that much reading with joy and regularity.

86. "Therefore, I came to the conclusion that only when Sai created love for it and says 'read', that I will undertake the reading without any problems.

87. "I have faith in Sai. When Sai instructs me to do so, I will read the *Dñyaneshwari* then only. So I will wait with this firm decision".

88. So be it. Then, in the month of February 1914, Deo came to Shirdi

with his mother and wife to see the pomp of the *Gurupuja* on *Mahoday Parva*[1].

89. Jog asked Deo then why he was not reading *Dñyaneshwari* regularly. Listen to his reply.

90. "I have a great love for the *Dñyaneshwari*, but I am not successful in reading it. Now, only when Baba tells me to read it, I will read it then".

91. Then Jog told him a stratagem. "Get the *Dñyaneshwari pothi* and give it in Sai Baba's hand. He will give it to you to read".

92. "I need no stratagem. Baba knows my innermost thoughts. Why can he not fulfil my desire and clearly say 'READ'?"

93. When he went for the *darshan* of the *Samartha*, he offered him one rupee. "Why one? Bring twenty," said Baba to him, then.

94. He brought twenty rupees and gave them. At night he met Balakram. He inquired of him how he had secured Baba's grace.

95. "Tomorrow, after the *arati* I will tell you the whole story", Balakram assured him and Deo agreed to that.

96. Then the next day when Deo went to the *Masjid* for *darshan* he was asked for twenty rupess which he gave with pleasure.

97. Seeing that it was very crowded there, Deo went aside. Baba asked: "Where is he hiding in a narrow difficult place?"

98. Deo replied: "Baba, here, I am here". Baba then asked him "Why did you give me only seven rupees?"

99. Deo replied: "I have given twenty". Baba asked: "Whose money is it?" "Baba it is yours," he replied. Baba said: "Why are you running away then?

100. Come here, come close. Sit near by with a calm mind". Deo followed the instructions, and sat there with a devoted heart.

101. The *arati* was done as usual. The assembled people returned to their homes. Balakram and Deo met again and the earlier question was again asked.

102. He asked him about his earlier life and Balakram told him everything from the beginning and how he was instructed in spirituality.

103. "Have you been told how to meditate? Please satisfy my desire," entreated Deo.

104. As Balakram was about to start answering Deo's question to satisfy his desire, Baba sent for Deo.

105. How extremely artful was Sai! He sent Chandru[2] to call Deo. Without wasting a moment, Deo came to meet Sree Sai.

106. It was afternoon. Sree Sai was seen, leaning both his hands on the wall of the *Masjid*.
107. As soon as he went, Deo bowed to him. Baba then asked him, "Where, with whom, and what were you talking?"
108. Then Deo replied: "On the upper storey of Kaka's house, I was hearing about your glory from Balakram and talking about it".
109. Baba ordered Deo: "Bring twenty-five rupees". Bringing the money immediately, he tendered them to Baba.
110. "How many did you bring?" Baba asked. Deo replied: "Twenty-five". Baba said: "Come, sit down" and Deo went with Baba to the *Masjid*.
111. Baba sat near the pillar and there was no one else in the *Masjid*. He said: "You have stolen my rags, without my knowledge".
112. "I know nothing about any rags", explained Deo. "Then, look for them somewhere here", Sai told him.
113. "Where are there any rags here" Deo asked at that moment. Baba got up saying: "You search for them. Stealing is a bad habit.
114. Some brat has taken them! Look! Look! They shoud be here!" Hearing this, Deo looked again but he did not find any.
115. Then raising his eyebrows, Baba looked here and there. With eyes fixed on Deo, Sai shouted at him.
116. "You are a liar! Who is here besides you at this time to steal the rags? I believe you are the thief.
117. Do you come here to steal, in this way? Your hair has turned from black to white but your bad ways have not gone!
118. I will hit you with an axe. I will cut you to pieces and kill you. Where will you escape from me? Wherever you are, I will come and kill you.
119. When you come to Shirdi from home, is it to steal? Take this back, which is yours. Bring back my rags to me".
120. Sai became red with anger. He abused him with a string of words, beginning with the mother and the grand mother. He became redder with fury.
121. Seeing that Sainath was furious, Deo stood still watching him with wonder and full of inner amazement.
122. Deo was near him and alone and felt that his turn had come to receive a beating. Or was this a beautiful vision of God? Believing this, he was choked with joy.
123. 'Will he take the *satka* in his hand now and will he beat me with anger? I am alone and in his hands now. Let him do what he wills.

124. But what is this mystery about the rags?' Deo did not understand anything. "Go, go away to one place"! When Sainath said this, he moved towards the steps.
125. I am incapable of understanding this hidden meaning about the 'rags'. If I receive Sai's grace and learn about it, I will relate it to the listeners.
126. Within a quarter of an hour, Deo again faced Baba, when the abuses were still continuing. "Have you again come up?" Sai said.
127. "Go away again to the *wada*"! As Baba said this, Deo obeyed the orders, bowed at Sai's feet and returned to the *wada*.
128. All that had happened and the manner in which it had taken place was described from beginning to end by Deo to Jog and Balakram.
129. Baba's volley of abuses continued for nearly half an hour. After quite some time, Baba himself called for the people.
130. Deo also then came and sat in the midst of others. "The old man must have felt bad", said Sree Sai later.
131. "What is the value of rags? Even then I have offended him by using abusive language. But he had committed a theft, so what was the remedy but to speak out?
132. So be it. God will see to everything and will benefit him. So, Bhau, will you give some *dakshina*?"
133. "How much shall I bring?" Deo asked. "Bring twelve rupees immediately". When Deo saw he only had a currency note and no loose coins.
134. Deo told this to Baba. "Never mind I do not want it. In the morning you gave me twice and forgot about it". Baba said.
135. Even so, Deo obtained the money and gave them to Baba, and bowed at Baba's feet. Hear the words that ensued.
136. "What are you doing?" Baba asked. "Nothing". When he got this reply, he said, "Read the *Pothi* regularly". This is what he ordered Deo to do.
137. "Go and sit in the *wada*. Read it regularly. While reading explain the portion read to all with love and devotion.
138. I am sitting here ready to give you a whole *zari*-embroidered mantle, then why should you steal rags? Have you got in the habit of stealing?"
139. So be it. 'The words of Sai to read the *Pothi* fulfilled my innermost desire and I was extremely happy.
140. Obeying the order, I then started from that day onwards reading the *Dñyaneshwari* regularly and also started explaining it.

141. Now I had got the desired orders. The worry of my mind in keeping my vow was removed. From now on, while reading the *Dñyaneshwari* there will be regularity in the work.

142. Now with my Guru's orders, *Dñyaneshwari* is also propitiated. Irrespective of whatever has happened in the past, I shall now be regular.

143. I am confident that with Sai's orders, and with the power of his instructions, I will be able to do the *parayan* of the *pothi* without any obstacles'.

144. "Baba! I come prostrated before you. I am totally surrendered to you. Take this child, under your wing. Get the *pothi* read by me".

145. 'I realised what was meant by 'rags'. What I had asked Balakram, constituted 'rags' and Sai had not approved of that and had, therefore, got angry.

146. 'Baba had not liked my questioning Balakram as to how he worshipped or how he meditated on *Parabrahma*.

147. As Baba was ready to answer any questions himself, why ask questions to one another? Therefore, I had been tremendously harassed.

148. 'Harassed' – that word itself is rude and impudent. He who was overflowing with love for the devotees did not even dream of harassing his devotees. Then the word and its use is wrong.

149. He did not harass but he taught me, that 'whatever is in your mind, all that has to be fulfilled by me and whatever is stolen will never be of any use'.

150. Though Sai appeared outwardly to be angry he was always calm within. He appeared angry outwardly but he was full of bliss within.

151. The anger that was shown outwardly was on account of affection. Within, he was in divine bliss. One must be fortunate to sing of the grandeur of that Sai's *leela*.

152. He who has an intense desire to achieve his objective believes that the volley of abuses is a shower of flowers and blessings, keeping one's mind fixed on one's own welfare.

153. Deo was not shaken on hearing the very abusive words which were offensive to the ears. He was full of love for Baba and he felt that only a shower of flowers had rained on him.

154. "Only the fortunate can enjoy the milk with which the cow's teat is gorged. The cattle louse, though near the teats full of milk, prefers blood due to its fate.

155. "The frog lives in the vicinity of the lotus flowers. The bee snatches

the honey from the lotus, while unfortunately the frog eats only the filth. There is no limit to the bee's good fortune.

156. "Similarly, you are fortunate. We are close to one another. Ask whatever you want and get your doubts clarified", says Sai.

157. "Observe my obstinacy about the *pothi*. I did not open the *Dñyaneshwari* to read till the moment he said READ. And Baba fully fulfilled my desire".

158. How the darling mother spoils the child, and fulfils his desires! This is the story of this sweet experience, which strengthens devotion.

159. Deo said: "He did not stop at merely directing me to read. Before a year passed, he gave me a dream vision. Listen to the amazing question, he asked me.

160. On 2nd April 1914[3], on Thursday morning, I got a boon of a dream.

161. Sai *Samartha* appeared in the dream to have come and was sitting on the first floor. He asked me if I understood the *pothi*, to which I replied in the negative.

162. Another question then followed. "When will you understand it then?" My eyes were filled with tears and hear the answer I gave.

163. "'Reading the *pothi* is mere worry unless you shower your grace and understanding it is even more difficult. Baba, I confess this clearly.'"

164. Baba said: "While reading the *pothi*, you make too much haste. Read it, in my presence, sitting near me".

165. When Deo asked what he should read, he was told to read *Adhyatma*. As Deo went to fetch the book, his eyes opened.

166. Deo awakened then. Listeners can imagine the state of his mind when he thought of the dream.

167. Who else would care to wait for a year[3] and then find out if the child is obeying the instructions strictly and regularly reading the *pothi* ? Who would take on such an unnecessary worry?

168. Has the discipline been followed? Has the lesson been regularly followed? Where and why is there any failure? Who else would show this concern?

169. What should the reader pay attention to? What should be given greater importance? Sai, the loving mother, alone can emphasise this.

170. The devotees experienced on many occasions such *leelas* of Sai *Samartha* and enjoyed the heavenly bliss. I have seen that with my own eyes.

171. Now, all you assembled listeners, being humble at the lotus feet of the Guru, hear the next novel story, at the proper time.

172. Remembering the feet of Sree *Samartha*, I come and prostrate with all true faith, which alone will remove all the sorrows of this world. Hemad surrenders with devotion.

173. Sai alone is my motivation. Sai alone is the supreme happiness of spirituality; Sai alone can fulfil me. This is my firm conviction.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-first chapter of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the dvotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Bestowal of Sai's Grace and Favour".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. A festival of joy. A good action that confers special merit upon the performance.
2. A leper devotee, who was near Baba at that time.
3. Deo got this dream within two months of his trip to Shirdi. The question of a year did not arise.

While singing the greatness of one's own Guru and listening about him, the mind will be purified. The repetition of his name with steady concentration, will result in the manifestation of the embodiment of bliss. (Ch. 41, ovi 3)

42

Leaving of the Body by Sainath

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Aum. My deep obeisance to the *Sadguru*, the bestower of everything, dweller on the banks of the *Srimad* Godavari! He who is *Brahman* Incarnate, Wearer of the loin cloth, the greatest among Saints, I bow to you.
2. One who guides in crossing the river of mundane existence and who grants refuge to the distressed at his feet, he is the wish-fulfilling tree of the devotees. Such is Sai, the Saint Incarnate.
3. In the last chapter, there was the narration of the interesting story describing the marvel of how the picture of Sai was saved from immersion in the water.
4. Also, how he fulfilled the wish of a devotee by appearing in his dream and made him read the *Dñyaneshwari* apparently giving him his consent.
5. In short, when Guru's grace is yours, the difficulties of the worldly existence disappear, the doors to the right path are opened without effort and unhappiness is turned to true happiness.
6. By constantly remembering the feet of the *Sadguru*, the obstacles cease to have any effect; death loses its sting; and the worldly sorrows are forgotten.
7. Therefore, the listeners should hear the story of the *Samartha* for their own benefit, for listening to it would truly gain great purification.
8. Now in this chapter, we shall ascertain the nature of Sai – how violent or how mild he could be.
9. Till this time, you have heard with full concentration about Baba's

way of life and behaviour. In the same way, listen to how Baba abandoned his body, with excellent attention.

10. Blessed, blessed are the people of Shirdi who had the pleasure of being in Baba's company for more than fifty years. These must have been very happy days!

11. In *Shaké* eighteen hundred and forty (year 1918), in the first month of *Dakshinayan*[1], in the brighter half of the month, on *Vijaydashmi*, was the day of Baba's leaving the body.

12. It was the ninth day of the month of *Mohorrum* of the Muslims and the night of the long knives (massacre of Imam Hussain). In the afternoon, Sainath prepared himself for eternal emancipation.

13. Just as the day for the birth celebrations of Buddha, so became Sai's *Punyatithi*. The birth dates of Gods and Goddesses are as much a cause of celebration as the death anniversaries of the Saints.

14. The bell struck 12.30 and the *dashmi* (tenth day) was over. *Ekadashi* (the eleventh day) had commenced. Hence, his *Nirayan* was on *Ekadashi*.

15. As it was *Dassera* when the sun arose on that day[2], the day has been considered as *Vijayadashmi* ; and, therefore, the memory of it is observed on that day.

16. Tuesday night was the night of the long knives (massacre), hence the day was very important (for the Muslims). Therefore, on that day, the great Sai merged his light with the Supreme Light, the *Brahman*.

17. It was the day of the end of the *Durga* Festival in Bengal and also a day of celebration for all in northern India.

18. In *Shaké* eighteen hundred and thirty eight (year 1916), in the evening of *Vijayadashmi* itself, before nightfall, an indication had been given about the future.

19. I shall narrate the inconceivable marvel (as to how it was done) whereby the listeners will be amazed. Thereby they will come to know the incomprehensible ways of *Samartha* Sai.

20. In the year 1916, at the time of *Seemolanghan*[3] of the *Dassera* festival, when the procession returned in the evening, this strange incident happened.

21. The clouds thundered in the sky and on and off lightening struck. In that manner, Baba manifested as a real incarnation of *Jamadagni* [4].

22. Untying the piece of cloth from his head, removing the *kafni*

suddenly, taking off the loin cloth, threw them all in the *dhuni* which blazed into flames.

23. The fire was already very bright and when it was fed by these offerings, it became more brilliant. The upsurge of flames rose high and mighty, and crackled loudly. The devotees were confused.

24. All this happened unexpectedly. It was difficult to know what Baba had in mind. His way of behaviour at the time of *Seemolanghan* was very frightening.

25. The fire's brilliance increased. But Baba appeared more lustrous than the fire. The people's eyes were dazzled and they averted their faces.

26. *Agninarayan*, Lord of the Fire, was propitiated by this offering at the hands of the saint. Blessed were the eyes that beheld the *Digambar Jamadagni* !

27. He glared with his eyes, red with anger. He said: "Decide for yourself now, whether I am a Muslim or a Hindu".

28. In a loud thundering voice Baba said: "Look! Decide today itself whether I am a Hindu or a Muslim, unrestrainedly and remove all your doubts".

29. Beholding the spectacle, the people around trembled with fear; and only thought about how he could be calmed down.

30. Bhagoji Shinde - the leper, but a great devotee of Baba, gathered courage and came near Baba to make him wear the loin cloth.

31. He said: "Baba, what is this behaviour? Today is *Seemolanghan*; and the festival of *Dassera*". Baba replied : "This is also my *Seemolanghan*", and began striking vigorously with the *satka*.

32. In this way, Baba stood near the *dhuni* without any clothes. It was the day for holding the *chavadi* procession. How would it be held was the worry.

33. The normal time for the *chavadi* procession was 9 pm but it was already 10 o'clock. Baba was not yet quietened down. The people remained rooted to their places helplessly, vacantly staring.

34. By and by it was 11 o'clock. Baba was also a little bit calm. Wearing a new loin cloth, he afterwards put on a *kafni*.

35. The bell for the *chavadi* rang. The assembled people were seated still in their place. The *palakhi* was decorated with flowers and was brought into the courtyard with his permission.

36. The silver mace, paper buntings, whisks, umbrella, flags etc. befitting a king, with which the procession was held, every alternate day, came out.

37. A loud proclamation in unison of "Hail! Hail Sainath" reverberated. How could the loud invocation be described? There was a flood of joy.
38. Afterwards, finding out a white cloth in good condition, Baba wound it round his head. He took his *chillum*, tobacco and *satka*, as if it was the right and auspicious time to start.
39. Someone held the umbrella and someone the whisks. Some one carried the ornamental fan of peacock feathers, and someone the flag with the eagle and a silk *zari*-embroidered awning. The staff bearers took the staves in their hands.
40. Under such a pretext, Baba indicated to all that *Dassera* alone was the auspicious time to cross the boundaries of the worldly existence.
41. Thereafter, Baba enjoyed only one more *Dassera* with the residents of Shirdi. Considering the next *Dassera* to be an auspicious time, he offered his body to the earth.
42. Not only did he give an indication but made people experience this. He offered his own body, a pure apparel, which on that very day was offered as an oblation in the fire of *yoga*.
43. In the year 1918, at the time of the *Dassera* festival of that year, true to his words, he made it an auspicious time to merge himself with the Supreme Spirit.
44. While writing this, I am reminded of another incident of Baba, that this festival of *Dassera* was earlier ordained.
45. The Patil of Shirdi, Ramchandra Dada, fell very ill once. He could not bear the pain, which was beyond endurance.
46. No remedy was left untried yet the pain did not subside. He felt tired of life. Patil felt greatly worried.
47. When he was in this mental state, one midnight, suddenly Baba appeared at the head of his bed.
48. Then Patil clasped his feet and in desperation said to Baba: "When will death come to me? Tell me only that please.
49. Now I am tired of life. Nor am I afraid of death. I am only waiting for death to come to me".
50. Then, Baba, the embodiment of mercy said: "Do not worry. Your fear of danger to life has been averted. Why do you unnecessarily worry?
51. "You have nothing to fear. Your death warrant has been sent back. But, Ramchandra, I do not see a chance of safety for Tatya.
52. "In *Shaké* eighteen hundred and forty, when the sun is apparently

moving from north to south, in the month of *Ashwin*, on *Vijayadashmi* day, in the brighter half of the month, Tatya will attain heavenly bliss.

53. "But do not tell him that; otherwise he will take fright and pine away day and night. No one likes death".

54. Only two years remained. Tatya's time was drawing near. Ramchandra became anxious as Baba's words were always true and like a thunderbolt.

Ramchandra Dada Patel

55. This prediction was kept a secret from Tatya but he confided it to Bala Shimpi, with an earnest request not to reveal it to anyone. Both of them were now worried about it.

56. Since then, really, Ramchandra Patil recovered; and left his bed. One day passed off after another and time slipped away unnoticed.

57. The truth of Baba's words is amazing! The month of *Bhadrapad* of 1840 *Shaké* was over and the month of *Ashwin* peeped in. Tatya became ill and was confined to bed.

58. On the one hand, Tatya was ill with fever (at home) and on the other, Baba was shivering. Tatya had full faith in Baba and Baba's protector was the Lord.

59. Tatya was unable to leave his bed and come for Baba's *darshan*. Immense was his physical suffering which he was unable to bear.

60. Though he was himself distressed with his suffering, his mind was attached to Baba. He could not move or stir and his suffering increased.

61. On the other hand, Baba's moaning and wailing increased twice as much, day by day. In no time, the ailment became uncontrollable and did not subside.

62. The day predicted by Baba drew near. Bala Shimpi quaked with fear and so did Patil Ramchandra.

63. They said: "Baba was absolutely correct. Now that is certain. The symptoms are not at all good and the suffering is on the increase".

64. The tenth day of the bright half dawned. Tatya's pulse became slower; and he was in a death-like trance. The relatives gathered round him were exhausted.

Tatya G. Patil Kote

65. But then occurred a miracle! Tatya's danger to life was also arrested. Tatya lived and Baba left, as if he had exchanged places with him.

66. Now, recall Baba's words. Though Baba used Tatya's name, he made preparations for his own departure, correct to the minute.

67. It is no use denying it that when he had given the indication, he had thrown light on the future. But until the event happened, none had realised the implication.

68. People say that Baba averted Tatya's death by giving his own life. He alone knows the truth.

69. On the night that Baba left his mortal coil, early morning at sunrise, Baba gave a dream vision to Ganu Das at Pandharpur.

70. "The *Masjid* has collapsed. All the grocers and oil mongers of Shirdi troubled me a lot, so I am leaving that place.

71. Therefore I have come here. Cover my body with *Bakhkhal* flowers. Fulfil this desire of mine. Come quickly to Shirdi".

72. Just then, from a letter sent from Shirdi, he learnt about Baba's *Mahasamadhi*. Learning this news, Das Ganu left for Shirdi, without losing a moment.

73. Bringing with him all his disciples, placing themselves in front of the *Samadhi*, he commenced doing *kirtan* and *bhajan* of the Lord's name, in a loud voice, and continued the whole day.

74. Weaving a beautiful garland of flowers, with his own hands, studded with Lord Hari's name, he offered it at the *Samadhi* with love and with food offerings.

75. Listening to the continuous reverberations of the chanting of the Lord's name, Shirdi seemed like a heavenly place. The whole atmosphere was filled with the chanting of the Lord's name and Ganu Das gave a plentiful feast of it, for all to partake.

76. Why did Baba like *Dassera* only? Because, it was one out of the three and a half auspicious days in the year (when there is no need to find out the *muhurat* or auspicious time). All know very well that an auspicious time for departure is valued or chosen.

77. It is also not proper to say this. One who is beyond birth or death, how could there be a departure for him or the necessity of an auspicious time for it?

78. One who is not bound by religion or otherwise; one who has control over all attachments; one who has no ascending of his vital life force – what is *Niryan* for him?

79. *Brahmaiva Sanbrahmapayeti* [5]. For Sai *Maharaja* this description is applicable. So he has no beginning nor end. What is *Niryan* status for him?

80. Whether the sun is seemingly travelling to the north or the south, he who has not to undertake the journey at all, and whose life force

merges with the Supreme where he is, it is like the light of the lamp being extinguished and it becoming dark.

81. The body is a loan taken from the five elements. Once its task is accomplished, it returns to the same elements.

82. Earlier, Baba had given an indication of what was to happen in a marvellous way. The precious time has passed but the glory remains.

83. Getting fever was a pretext. Imitating ordinary people, he moaned and groaned at times. But within, he was always alert and conscious.

84. After 9.30 or 10 in the morning, when the time for *Niryan* came near, he sat up by himself, fully conscious.

85. Seeing Baba in such a condition, the sea of hope rose in the hearts of the people. All felt that the dangerous or evil time had passed.

86. So, as all sat dejected and worried in this way, the time for Baba's *Niryan* came near. Listen to what happened then.

87. Where there were only a few moments left for the *niryan*, none knew what was in his mind. He put his hand in the pocket of the *kafni* knowing that it was the right time for charity.

88. A greatly virtuous woman, named Lakshmi, whose deeds matched her name, who was always devoted at Sai's feet, was near him at that time.

89. Baba, very cautiously, donated some money to her since Baba had realised that his *Niryan* was imminent.

90. She was the same Lakshmibai Shinde who came to Baba in the *Masjid*, connected with some work or service as needed.

91. During the day, it was the rule that the *Durbar* was open for all. Generally, nobody was refused permission. But there were strict rules for the night.

92. When the evening round was over, the assembled people returned to their respective homes (from the *Masjid*) and returned to the *Masjid* only the next morning at sunrise.

93. But considering the devotion of *Bhagat* Mhalsapati, Dada (Kelkar) and Lakshmi, they were not denied permission even at night.

94. The same Lakshmi, with great love, daily sent vegetables and *bhakris* for Baba, at the right time. How can this service be adequately praised!

95. When you hear about the origin of the practice of sending *bhakris* you will understand about Baba's compassionate nature, and his oneness with dogs and pigs. You will be amazed.

96. One evening, Baba was sitting against the wall, leaning his chest against the bannisters, engaged in lovable talk, when Lakshmi arrived there.

97. Tatya Patil was near by and there were others also. Lakshmi made her obeisance to Baba, when Baba said to her:

98. "Lakshmi, I am hungry". "Baba, I will go and bring *bhakri*. No sooner than I go that I shall return with it".

99. Saying this she left immediately. She baked some *bhakris* and returned without loss of time, along with some vegetables and chutney, and placed this snack before Baba.

100. Baba picked up the plate and put it before the dog as it was. "Baba what have you done?", Lakshmi asked promptly.

101. "In spite of my having gone so swiftly and baked the *bhakris* quickly, you offered them to the dog! What is this novel way of yours!

102. "You said you were hungry. What kind of marvellous hunger is this? You have not even had one small morsel of it! You have unnecessarily troubled me".

103. Then Baba said to her: "Why do you fret unnecessarily? Satisfying the hunger of this dog is the same as giving me appeasement. Bear this in mind.

104. "Isn't this dog a living creature? All beings experience the same hunger. Though it is dumb and I can speak, is there any difference in the hunger that both experience?

105. "He who feeds those distressed by hunger really serve me with food. Know this and regard it as an axiomatic truth".

106. This incident was a simple one, connected with daily life, but the lesson was full of spiritual value. Sai's words for such a lesson were perfectly flavoured with love and kindness.

107. Speaking in words of daily parlance, he imparted the outline of spiritual teaching. Without pinpointing anybody's shortcomings and follies, he kept his devotees happy.

108. From that time onwards, according to the advice, started Lakshmi's *bhakari*, crushed into milk and offered with love daily.

109. Later Baba began to eat that *bhakri* offered with love and devotion, daily. When there was a delay, he was uneasy and he did not feel like eating.

110. If there was a delay in getting the *bhakri* from Lakshmi, though it was past meal time, he would not put a morsel in the mouth.

111. The food served in the plates would get cold. He would wait

though hungry; but till Lakshmi's *bhakri* came, he would not eat any food.

112. After some time had passed, Baba asked daily for vermicelli made by Lakshmi in the afternoons, and would eat with her sitting beside him.

113. Baba ate very little and sent what remained, with Lakshmi to Radhakrishna, who savoured the leftovers with great love.

114. While the narration was about abandoning the body, why should he tell this irrelevant story about the *bhakri* ? Let not the listeners ask this. It is indicative of Sai's all pervasiveness.

115. Sai pervades, perpetually, all that is visible and invisible, and is also the Supreme Spirit beyond that. Sai is He that is Unborn and Eternal.

116. This is the essence of this story. That is why I was casually reminded of this sweet story of Lakshmi, I believe, for the sake of the listeners.

117. So how could Sai forget such devoted service of Lakshmi? Listen with reverence to the narration of the marvellous way by which he remembered it.

118. Though he was on the verge of breathing his last and the body was slackened and weak, Baba with his own hands gave a donation to her, at the time of passing away.

119. Taking out from the pocket once five and then four rupees, he placed them on her hands. This was the last act of Baba.

120. Was it indicative of the nine types of devotion, or was it because of the worship of *Ambika* at *Navrathra* [6] had been completed and it was the *Seemolanghan*? Was it the *dakshina* of *Seemolanghan*?

121. Or was Baba giving a reminder of the nine good qualities required of a disciple as told by Sree Krishna to Uddhava of the 'Shrimad Bhagvat' ?

122. In the eleventh *skanda*, tenth chapter and sixth verse, there is a marvellous description of how the disciple should behave to acquire spiritual progress.

123. Earlier, in the first, half, five qualities are described and in the next half only four. Since Baba also followed this pattern, I think he had this same purpose.

124. A disciple should be modest, able, free from envy, unselfish or disinterested, always ready to serve the Guru, eager to have spiritual knowledge and of steadfast temperament.

125. He should have no hatred, nor engage in loquaciousness. These are the qualities required to please the *Gururaya*.

126. This was the only intention of Sree Sainath which he expressed in this manner. Compassionate Saints always do so only for the welfare of their own devotees.

127. Lakshmi was well-to-do. What could she care for nine rupees? She could gift away several times this amount. Yet this donation was invaluable to her!

128. She was exceedingly fortunate to have acquired such a grace, so that she received the nine jewels from Sai's own lotus hands.

129. Not only nine, but many times nine, would pass through her hands; but this very unusual gift would remind her of Sai, till she lived.

130. Though the time for abandoning his body was near, yet with proper planning, and giving of first five and then four, he left with her a memory, she would cherish till her death.

131. Having displayed such cautiousness, he sent the near and dear ones for lunch; but it was observed that one or two people from amongst the villagers were made to stay.

132. But quite a few from among his loving devotees insisted on not leaving Baba's side, knowing that the time was difficult.

133. But at the proper time, in the last moments, he quickly sent away all of them so that he may not be entangled by love and affection.

134. Realising that the time for departure was very close, Baba told Butti, Kaka and others: "Go, go to the *wada* and return after lunch".

135. Seeing the distress and concern of the others, Baba was disturbed himself. "Go, go. Eat and return. Go now," he ordered everybody.

136. These were his daily companions and frequent visitors who were near him day and night. Though they were distressed, they got up to leave according to his orders.

137. At that time they could not leave his presence nor could they disobey his orders. They could not go against Baba's wishes. So they went to the *wada* for lunch.

138. Their sorrow was unbearable. How could they have lunch or eat anything! Their hearts were with Baba and they could not bear to forget him, even for a moment.

139. Yet they left and sat down to eat. But soon thereafter, they were asked to return. They ran back leaving their meals unfinished but they were unable to meet him.

140. When the oil of the span of life finished, the flame of life dimmed. The body found rest on the lap of Bayaji (Appa Kote).

141. He did not fall on the ground nor did he lie on his bed; but sitting quietly on his seat, doing charity with his own hands, he threw off the mortal coil.
142. Nobody knew *Samartha*'s mind or heart's secret. He left the body in no time and became one with the Supreme Spirit.
143. Wearing the cloak of the body, from *Maya*, the Saints manifest in the world. Soon after their work of upliftment is completed they merge with the formless.
144. An actor plays many roles but fully knows his own identity. Those who manifest themselves resume their own identity after their work is done. What is death to them?
145. He who manifested for the benefit of the people ended the *Avatar* as soon as his mission was complete. Could he be bound by life and death, who takes a form by his own divine sport?
146. How can there be a possibility of death for him whose glory is the Supreme Spirit? He who is the embodiment of detachment, how can existence or non-existence have any effect on him?
147. Though ostensibly he appears to be engaged in action, he hardly ever performs any. Being without any ego, when doing any action he believes that it is not he who is doing anything.
148. "Action does not end without experiencing its fruit". This is the essence of action as implied in the *Smritis*. There is no delusion in case of the knower of *Brahman*, since he sees *Brahman* in every entity.
149. This is the fruit achieved on account of a collection of deeds. Such a duality is well known but here, too, the knower of *Brahman* believes it to be *Brahman*, as a silver sheen on the oyster.
150. How could Baba, like a loving mother, fall prey to death? It was as if the day was eclipsed by a dark night.
151. Now let me end this chapter here. Keeping in mind the usual monthly instalment, if I exceed the listeners will become restless and be tired.
152. The remaining story of his leaving the body, listeners will be able to hear in due course. Hemad surrenders to Sai *Samartha*. He has attained his welfare by his Grace.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-second chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Leaving of the Body by Sainath".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. The half year in which the sun is said to move from north to south.
2. *Tithi* - the time between the two consecutive risings of the sun is the day, according to the Indian calendar.
3. The crossing of the border in pompous procession on the festival of *Dassera*.
4. A descendant of Bhrigu, follower of Parasurama. A pious sage engaged in study. He was anger personified.
5. One who has no desires, has no fruits thereof. So he is not re-born. Therefore, there is no departure of his vital life force. In this world, such a person is Brahma and attains *Brahman*.
6. Goddess *Durga* (also known as *Ambika*) is worshipped for nine days in the month of *Ashwin*.

When the oil of the span of life finished, the flame of life dimmed. The body found rest on the lap of Bayaji Appa Kote. (Ch. 42, ovi 140)

Bayaji Appa Kote

Lakshmibai with the 9 coins

43

Leaving of the Body by Sainath

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. In the last chapter, the narration of the leaving of the body by Saint Sai *Samartha* was given. Now what remains unfinished will be completed in this.
2. My unique love for Sai has been kindled by that *Samartha*. Hemad has surrendered at his feet and outlines the story.
3. It is he who gives a liking for devotion; it is he who increases the greatness of the stories; it is because of him that worship through *bhajan* has attained glory and brings about aversion to this mundane world.
4. Therefore, with my whole heart and soul, I do obeisance to him countless times. I cannot even fully think of his greatness in meditation but it is possible only through complete surrender.
5. In order to completely wash off the accumulated defilement of the sins and to have self-purification, other means are futile.
6. There is not another simpler way to have self purification than to remember the glory achieved by the devotee of God, and to do *bhajans* and *kirtans* of that glory.
7. So be it. Let us recollect the story already narrated in the last chapter and deliberate over it; then we may proceed further with the narration of Sai's merger in Self Bliss.
8. Earlier it has been narrated in detail why the leaving of the body took place on *Vijayadashmi* and how the future was predicted using Tatya's name as a pretext.
9. Later, just before leaving the body, adhering to religious tradition how he gave the money to Lakshmi – all that has been described fully.

10. Now in this chapter, I will narrate how Sai listened to the *Ramayan*, for his own benefit, as read by a Brahmin, as the time for leaving the body approached.
11. Also, how the place for the *Samadhi* was chosen and how unexpectedly the brick had fallen down. Listen to it attentively.
12. Also how once he raised his *prana* high up (and went into *samadhi*) for three days. How could it be *samadhi* ? People were absolutely certain that it was the leaving of the body.
13. Preparations for the rites were made but unexpectedly Baba attained consciousness and the people were taken aback! Listen to how it all happened.
14. So be it. Listeners will be irked by hearing the story about the leaving of the body. No one likes to hear such a story.
15. But this story of the leaving of the body of the Saintly Sage will purify the listeners and the narrator. For fear of its being lengthy, listen to it in parts, till you are satisfied.
16. By leaving the body, he became inaccessible; but for him it was a blissful state. Baba attained the eternal state never to be born again.
17. He was visible when he was in body; after leaving the body he was not perceivable. His *Avatar* at one place and for one mission ended; but he was at all places and all-pervasive and omnipotent.
18. He was freed from being bound to one place and was all- pervasive. He became absolutely eternal and merged with the Supreme Self.
19. Sai was the reason for everyone's life itself. Without Sai the villagers were devastated.
20. When his body became lifeless there arose a wail of sorrowing agony. The old and the young disturbed by grief seemed to become lifeless themselves.
21. Fever and other ailments which affect the common man do not unnecessarily trouble Saints and Ascetics.
22. By kindling their own lustre, Saints extinguish their own bodies. Baba did the same with his own hands.
23. What should never have happened, had happened! *Maharaj* became one with the Supreme Spirit. The people were dispirited, sobbed and whimpered.
24. 'It would have been better if I had not left. I missed meeting him in the last moments. If I had been there, I might have proved useful in some way. My wits were not about me, at the right time'.

25. In this manner, with similar thoughts, all and sundry felt dejected. Who could know, what Baba had in mind?
26. There was no death rattle nor troublesome breathing; no cough nor shivering nor any struggle. He passed away easily and peacefully.
27. 'Now how would there be Sai's *darshan*, or pressing of Sai's feet, or drinking the *tirtha*?'
28. Knowing that the time for the end had come, then why were the loving devotees sent away though they had been so near? Why were they made to undergo this anguish?
29. Seeing the whole assembly of near and dear devotees near by, at the time of passing away, could Baba's love have sprung up for them then?
30. Bonds of attachment come in the way of attaining salvation. If they are not broken at the right time, how can the mind be free of desires?
31. If death comes when this has not happened and life leaves with these desires and attachments, then immediately another cycle of existence starts, with a flood of attachments.
32. To avoid this, Saints and Sages are always alert. Baba's determination also was only to practise the custom prevalent among the people.
33. In the last moments one should be alert about this. There should be peace and solitude, and the chosen deity's image should be fixed in the mind without any distraction.
34. "One is reborn according to one's last thoughts", is the well-known axiom. Saints themselves practise this to maintain the prevalent custom.
35. When there were only fourteen days left for Baba's passing away, Baba appointed Vaze to read *Ramvijay*.
36. Vaze sat in the *Masjid* and began the reading of the holy book. Baba began to listen to it. Thus eight days passed.
37. Then Baba ordered that the book be read without a break. So, Vaze read it in this manner, for three days and nights.
38. He sat for full eleven days. Later he was tired and felt weak. He was exhausted with the reading. In this way three more days passed.
39. So what did Baba do later? He stopped the reading. He sent Vaze away from there and kept quiet himself.
40. Listeners would ask the reason for sending away Vaze. So, hear what I am going to explain to the best of my ability. Hear it with concentration.

41. It is the practice of Saints, Sages and wise people to listen to religious books, when the time for the passing away is near.
42. Acharya Shuka[1] recounted the 'Maha Bhagvat' in seven days to King Parikshit[2], who heard it and attained death happily.
43. While listening to the *leelas* of the Lord and keeping the image of the Lord before one's eyes, if one passes away then one attains the ultimate goal.
44. This is generally the trend amongst the common people. The Saints practise it themselves without fail. They do not break tradition, because they manifest to protect it.
45. They who disregard their bodies made of five elements, they have no pain or sorrow at the time of death. This is just natural for them.
46. So be it. Here listeners may doubt, if persons who are engrossed in Supreme Bliss, could be troubled by illusion and greed! How could one even think about it?
47. One who abided in the Self and always uttered "*Allah-Malik*", how could he be entangled by the nearness of his devotees?
48. He had transcended the world. His spirituality remained. Duality did not at all exist for him. He became one with the Supreme Spirit.
49. What I am telling you is nothing but the truth, word for word. There is no trace of untruth in it. But taking *Avatar*, for the good of the people, Saints are gratified knowing that they have fulfilled their mission.
50. The Saints are free from the six vices and passions. They are always present, invisible to the eye. They take form only for the salvation of the devotees. How could they have death?
51. The conjunction of the body with the senses, is being born. Their separation is death. This joining and separation is called birth and death.
52. Birth is doggedly pursued by death. They are inseparable. Death is the natural state of life. And living is life's distortion.
53. Those who remain after overcoming death, and even control death, how could they be concerned about their life span when they have manifested by their own wish?
54. He who takes different *Avatars* with the only desire of the welfare of the devotees how can he be touched by birth and death? These are both illusions.
55. Know that he who has reduced the body to ashes even before

acquiring it, how can he have any fear of death. Death is reduced to ashes before him.

56. Death itself is body's natural state. Death itself is the happy state for the body. Life is the body's distortion. Ask the wise ones.

57. Sai *Samartha*, the Cloud of Bliss, who did not know about the birth of his body, how could his body experience death? He does not know about the body's existence.

58. How could there be birth or death for Sai, who is *Parabrahma* Himself? Knowing that *Brahma* is Truth and the world a mirage, how could he have body consciousness?

59. Taking on life or abandoning it, or roaming the space formlessly, is done at will by the power of *Yoga*, for the benefit of the devotees.

60. "The sun has been eclipsed and has disappeared completely", say the people. But it is merely the fault of the sense perception. The death of Saints is likewise.

61. The body is merely a burden. How can they have pain or suffering? If they have any, it is because of the bonds of fate. But they are not concerned.

62. He who manifested because of the past meritorious deeds of the devotees and was filled with devotion invisibly, he appeared for the welfare of the devotees. It was then that he was perceived in Shirdi.

63. It was said that now the work of the welfare of the devotees was completed, and, therefore, he abandoned the body. Who will place faith in these words? What is life and death for a *yogi*?

64. Sai *Samartha* abandoned his body as per his own will and burnt the body in the *Yoga Agni* (fire). He became one with the unseen but remained eternally in the hearts of the devotees.

65. How can he die, the remembrance of whose name breaks the cycle of life and death for others? He attained his earlier Invisible Self.

66. Going beyond the gross state Baba became one with the unseen, where he enjoyed being one with God. But always he keeps the devotees alert.

67. He who throbs with the Supreme Spirit and is permanently engraved in the hearts of the devotees then how could his body be said to have ceased to be. Such words are unacceptable.

68. Therefore, this Sai who is without a beginning or an end will ever be there until the *pralay* (deluge) of the world.

69. Has Dñyanoba Maharaj gone away? He gave *darshan* to Eknath Maharaj after three hundred years and gratified the world.

70. Just as Eknath became the light of Paithini, so did Tukaram Maharaj in Dehu and Narasimha Saraswati in Alandi;

71. *Samarth* Ramadas in Parli, Akkalkotkar in Akalkot, Prabhu Manik in Humnabad and similarly Sai in Shirdi.

72. 'One has experiences commensurate with one's faith'; even to-day. When the power of this axiom exists for him, how can there be death for such a one!

73. He, who espoused the causes of the devotees, has abandoned his body in Shirdi and is all-pervasive with the movable and the immovable. He is capable of taking *Avatar* again.

74. 'Now what is there in Shirdi, as the *Samartha* has mingled with *Brahman*?!' Have no such doubts, as Sree Sai is beyond death.

75. Saints are not born (from the womb). They manifest themselves for obliging others. They are the embodiment of *Brahman*. Only the fortunate ones so manifest.

76. Those who are incarnate are never born and they never die. As soon as their mission is completed they merge with *Brahman* and become one with the unseen.

77. A body is of a three-and-a-half hands' length. Could Baba be said to be contained in that? It is improper to say that he was of a particular size, shape or colour.

78. The eight *siddhis*, such as *anima and garima* do not increase or decrease by the coming or going of the people, for such persons. These are their own, eternal glories. They are famous for that.

79. The manifestation of such great souls is only for the welfare of the people. Their appearance, their existence and their disappearance happens as a natural phenomenon. The Saints are ever ready to get the people to follow them.

80. Birth is an illusion. Death is a delusion. Oneness of the soul is the state beyond decay – in fact, the highest bliss in a dream. Such is the condition of the Saints.

81. Even otherwise, for him who is a store of knowledge and is always one with the Supreme Spirit, to take care of the body or to leave it is the same.

82. Enough of this. As soon as Baba left the body, a mountain of calamity crashed on our heads. There was great lamentation throughout Shirdi. A great moaning arose.

83. The news of Baba having left the body pierced the hearts of everyone like an arrow. All routine work stopped and people ran around confusedly.

84. As this inauspicious news spread, everyone felt it was a thunderbolt. Some sensible ones sat silent while others began to wail.

85. Because of their excessive love, they were choked with emotion. Tears of sorrow trickled from their eyes. They loudly chanted: "Hail Shiva, Shiva!"

86. In every house there was tumult and confusion. It was the same turmoil everywhere. All hearts were palpitating.

87. By *Maharaj* leaving the body, it seemed as if all the village had died. They said: "Lord, this terrible event has pierced our hearts".

88. Everyone got up and ran. All crowded into the *Masjid* and its courtyard. The situation was heart-breaking and the throats were choked with sorrow.

89. Shirdi's glory was gone; its happiness and prosperity ended; everything was lost. Everyone's eyes were filled with tears and their courage was shattered.

90. That which was counted amongst the seven holy places and which Baba always called *Dwarkamayi*, unfailingly, was the greatness of that *Masjid*.

91. Whether it is eternal emancipation, or abandoning of the body or death, Dwarka is the place for absorption into the essence of *Brahman*. He who constantly meditates on God has a place there.

92. That Gururaj, Sairaya, compassionate mother and father of the devotees, the abode of repose of the devotees, is remembered always.

93. Shirdi was desolate without Baba. The whole atmosphere (all the directions) had a vacuum and was sorrowful. Shirdi appeared like a lifeless body.

94. Just as the fish thrashed about in a pond whose water has dried up, so were the people of Shirdi, sorrowful and without zest.

95. Just as a lake is without a lotus, a home is empty without a son, or a temple is without a lamp, the environment of the *Masjid* was like that.

96. Shirdi without Baba, was like a house without its master, a kingdom without a king, an empty treasury – an impenetrable forest.

97. The love of the people of Shirdi and all the devotees towards Baba was like that of a mother for the child, or of the *Chatak* for the water from the clouds.

98. Shirdi appeared without zest, half-dead, wretched and poor. Like a fish without water, the people writhed.

99. All the old and young were like a wife rejected by her husband, or

like a mother refusing her suckling children, or like the calf separated from the cow.

100. Unbearable was this grief-stricken state! All the people of Shirdi ran here and there, in a disorderly manner and in all directions.

101. Shirdi was holy because of Sai only; it attained historical importance because of Sai only; it became a pilgrim centre only because of Sai. Sai only was the protector of all.

102. Some cried out aloud; some rolled in the dust; some lay unconscious. The people were full of misery.

103. Tears of sorrow trickled down from the eyes of men and women who were very morose. They forsook eating and drinking and became pitiable.

104. Seeing Baba's inert form, the villagers were extremely unhappy. All the devotees, young and old, were very uneasy.

105. That *Masjid*, where sweet and interesting stories were heard, where there was daily joyousness, and where one could not find even a small space to enter, was desolate.

106. That Shirdi, was always prosperous and auspicious earlier for all, only because of Baba, and now without him, the villagers were restless.

107. "The root and the embodiment of heavenly bliss, you took a form for the welfare of the devotees and when the mission was completed, how wonderfully you abandoned the body in the village.

108. "For all the twenty-four hours, you actively and earnestly taught us for our benefit, because we were confused, always.

109. "Your teachings fell upon us like water on an overturned pot and flowed away and we did not retain even a drop".

110. 'It grieves me immediately when you speak badly of anyone', you often repeated. Yet we did not obey you.

111. How many of us are guilty of not having obeyed this good advice! Have you repaid us in this manner for our disobedience and not atoning for it?

112. Baba does this requite all those sins? What is the point of now being repentant? It is necessary for each one to suffer for his deeds.

113. Is it because of that, that you have got tired of us? And placed yourself beyond the veil? How has death unexpectedly brought this calamity upon us?

114. It seems you became disgusted, dinning your lessons to us till you became hoarse and seeing our indifference.

115. Are you therefore annoyed with us and forgotten all your earlier love? Or is it that the bonds of earlier lives have ended to-day; or is it that the flow of your love has dried up?

116. Had we understood earlier that you would leave us so suddenly, it would have been much better. At least, the people would have been more alert.

117. All of us were lazy and were caught napping. Ultimately, we were thus trapped and good for nothing.

118. We became traitors to the Guru; as we did nothing at the appropriate time. We could not even stay peaceful.

119. We came to Shirdi from distant places and there too sat gossiping. We forgot altogether that we had come to a holy place and acted there, also, according to our own will.

120. Devotees of varied and different natures came – wise ones, egoistic, selfish, argumentative. But to the knower, they were one, in their pristine form and there was no difference between them as being superior or inferior.

121. He, who sees no other entity apart from God in all creation – in fact this is his glory and he has no second.

122. The devotee himself is God. The Guru is no different. But when both have forgotten the Real Self, the difference arises because of that.

123. In reality, we are God ourselves. But we have forgotten the divinity within us. This is the main reason for the difference and the fall from grace.

124. An emperor in his dream sees himself going from door to door begging for alms. On waking, he realises the truth and knows that his situation hasn't changed.

125. Activity when we are in the waking state ceases when we are in the dreaming state. Real awakening is Self Realisation and being completely absorbed in Unity, Consciousness.

126. He had immense love for the wise, the ignorant and all the dependents. He treated all of them dearer than life. There was not even a bit of differentiation.

127. Though experience had shown that he was God in human form, his pampering and indulgence became the undoing of all.

128. Some were given riches and wealth. Some were given happiness in worldly life and the boon of children. Because of that, there arose a strong delusion and acquisition of true knowledge was lost.

129. When sometimes he laughed and joked with somebody, that person became puffed up with pride thinking that he alone was greatly loved and others were not shown that affection.

130. Similarly if he spoke angrily to someone, they said that he was not liked by Baba and that Baba gave them alone all the respect and not to others.

131. While engaged in making such comparisons, which Baba did not even dream of, it's we who were the losers in so far as our good was concerned and forgot our ultimate aim.

132. By good fortune, *Parabrahma* and the Embodiment of the Supreme Spirit was so close to us. But we forgot the main purpose and lost the opportunity in fun and frolic.

133. As soon as they came, the people took Baba's *darshan* and offered him fruits, flowers and all other things. But when he asked for *dakshina*, they slipped away from there and did not stay there.

134. Seeing our petty faults and failings he told us stories for our welfare. It seems, however, that he was greatly troubled and left suddenly for his own abode.

135. "Will these eyes now ever see again your Self Blissful state? That blissful image is gone and lost for ever and anon!"

136. Oh, see this devastating fate! Sai, our friend is lost forever. He was selfless, and compassionate. Such a one has become a stranger to us!

137. "It is not good to harass others. It hurts me", he said. But we paid no attention to it and continued to quarrel as much as we wished to.

138. We lost you Sainath, as devotees and others harassed each other. We are now repentant as we now remember your words.

139. It is said that *Maharaj* had told his devotees that in time to come, he would reappear as a lad of eight years.

140. These are the words of a Saint and no one should doubt them. Chakrapani in the Krishna *Avatar* did exactly this.

141. Krishna appeared before Devaki in the prison as a lad of eight years, with a lustrous complexion wielding weapons in his four arms.

142. In that incarnation, the purpose was to lighten the burden of the earth; in this, the upliftment of his devotees; where is the reason for doubt, then? The ways of the Saints are really inscrutable.

143. This determination was not due to the contact of only one life but it was a relationship that existed for seventy-two generations, which was told by Baba to the devotees and which has been narrated earlier.

144. Bonding with such ties of love, it seems that *Maharaj* has gone on a tour and the devotees have a firm belief that he would return.

145. He gives divine visions to many; he appears in dreams to quite a number; and he grants miracles to several people secretly.

146. He is never seen by those who have no faith; while the devotees and the believers find him near them always. One experiences according to one's mental state.

147. In the *chavadi*, he is present invisibly; in the *Masjid*, he is Brahma Incarnate; in the *Samadhi* (*Mandir*) he is in *Samadhi*. The bliss of his presence is everywhere.

148. So, at present, this is the belief that devotees should hold. Sai *Samartha* is always there, permanently and continuously.

149. Deities leave for their abode. Saints remain in *Brahma* state. There is no coming and going for them. They merge with the Supreme Spirit blissfully.

150. Therefore, this is my only request. I bow down in all humility to all, the young and the old. Listen respectfully to all I say.

151. Develop companionship or association with those who are well-known, virtuous and divine; have selfless love at the feet of the Guru; have inclination to tell stories about the virtues and glory of the Guru.

152. Develop inseparable love for the Guru; never let that bond of love break. Let the devotees remain blissful, at the feet of the Guru, day and night.

153. So, then, all the people, the devotees and the villagers began to discuss about the befitting last rites for the body.

154. Shrimant Butti, a great devotee, had already built a huge pleasing *wada*, which would be a future memorial.

155. Then, later, there were discussions for thirty-six hours on the subject where the body should be placed. Whatever was to happen did take place.

156. One said that the Hindus should not now be allowed to touch the body. It would be taken with pomp and show and placed in a Muslim Tomb.

157. Another said that it should be interred in an open space and a beautiful mausoleum should be built over it, where it should remain always.

158. Kushalchand and Amir Shakkar had the same opinion. But, "Place the body in the *wada*", were the words of Baba.

Ramchandra Patil

159. Ramchandra Patil was a very resolute person. He was an officer of the village, and a loving servitor of Baba. He spoke to the villagers.

160. "Whatever may be your opinion, it is not at all acceptable to us. Sai's body should not be placed anywhere else, outside the *wada*, even for a moment".

161. The Hindus held opinions as per their religious beliefs and, likewise the Muslims. There was a discussion about what was right and what was wrong throughout the night.

162. Now, Lakshman *Mama* who was in deep sleep at his home, in the early morning hours had a dream that Baba held his hand and said: "Get up quickly and come.

163. Bapusaheb will not come to-day. He believes that I am dead. At least you do the *Kakad Arati* for me with the *Puja*".

164. Immediately, as per the usual practice, bringing with him all the *puja* necessities, Lakshman *Mama* came on time and got ready to do the *puja*.

165. He was the village astrologer of Shirdi and uncle of Madhavrao (his mother's brother). He daily worshipped Baba in the early morning.

166. Lakshman *Mama* was a staunch *brahmin* and uncle of Madhavrao. After taking a bath in the morning and putting on clean washed clothes, he would take Baba's *darshan*.

167. He would wash Baba's feet, apply sandalwood paste with consecrated rice, offered flowers, leaves and *tulsi* and afterwards burnt incense, lit the lamp and offered *naivaidya*. Then he offered *dakshina*.

168. After offering eight-fold obeisance with prayers, he took Baba's blessings. Then he would apply the sandalwood paste *tilak* to all and distribute *prasad*. Then he would leave.

169. After that he would offer worship to the village deities of Gajanan, Shanidev (Saturn), Shiva (Umaraman) and Maruti, the son of Anjani.

170. In this manner, the astrologer Buva worshipped all the village deities daily. Therefore, he brought all the *puja* paraphernalia for doing *puja* for Baba's body with loving devotion.

171. As it is, *Mama* was very devoted; and, moreover, he had this vision. So he came with all the *kakad arati* requirements and did an eight-fold obeisance.

172. After removing the cloth covering the face, and looking at it with love, he washed the hands and feet, took a sip of the pure *tirth* (from the washings) and did the *puja* with all rituals.

173. The Moulvis and the other Muslims objected to his touching the body. But *Mama* took no notice, applied the sandal paste and completed the full *puja*.

174. After all the body was of the *Samartha*, the Deity he worshipped. He did not even think for a moment whether it was *Hindu* or Muslim.

175. When Baba was in body, what a joyous occasion it was to offer *puja*! Now that there was no life, it was still not a mere ritual.

176. Seeing Baba in this condition filled *Mama* with a lot of sorrow. He had come to do the last *puja*, as he would not be able to have further *darshan*.

177. *Mama* could not bear to see Baba in this condition. His eyes filled with tears and his hands and feet trembled. *Mama* was miserable.

178. Opening the closed fist, placing *pan-vida* and *dakshina* in it, covering the body as ealier, *Mama* left.

179. Later on, the noon *arati* of Sai was done by Bapusaheb Jog, as usual, in the *Masjid*, along with others.

180. So be it. What happened later on will be narrated in the next chapter – how Baba's body was prepared with all the *Hindu* rituals, in a large place.

181. Also how, a brick, which Baba loved very much and which had been his companion for many years, broke which was a bad omen and a precursor of death.

182. Also, how it would have been if this event had taken place thirty-two years back, when Baba had raised his *prana* high up (and gone into *samadhi*). It would have been a difficult situation.

183. How devotee Mhalsapati took care of Baba day and night; and how when all had given up hope, Baba had got up all of a sudden.

184. How can the glory be described of that *Yogacharaya*, who practised *Brahmacharaya* till the end of life and who was the foremost of the wise!

185. So let us offer obeisance to the one who has such greatness. Humble Hemad surrenders whole heartedly to him.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-third chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Leaving of the Body by Sainath".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Shuka was a born philosopher.
2. He was cursed by a Brahmin to die within seven days. Hence Shuka recounted the philosophy. It is said that *Kaliyug* commenced with this king's reign.

(Baba going into a breathless trance in the lap of Mhalsapati for 3 days)

Also, how it would have been if this event had taken place thirty-two years back, when Baba had raised his *prana* high up (and gone into *samadhi*). It would have been a difficult situation! (Ch.43, ovi 182)

How devotee Mhalsapati took care of Baba day and night; and how when all had given up hope Baba had got up all of a sudden. (Ch.43, ovi 183)

44

Leaving of the Body by Sainath

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Aum. I bow down to Sree Sai, abundant Supreme Consciousness, abode of all Happiness, store of all Prosperity. It is by your grace that all deprivation is removed.
2. By merely touching your feet all the sins are washed away. How much more blessed are those that worship you with all devotion!
3. One glance at your smiling face was enough to forget all worldly sorrows, and to immediately satisfy hunger and thirst. Such was the unique *darshan*.
4. How can I describe the greatness of one who always meditated on "*Allah-Malik*", who was disinterested, without pride, without greed and without any desires.
5. We cannot forget even for a moment, he who obliges even those who harm him and has such peace of mind. Give him a place in your hearts.
6. Ram and Krishna are lotus-eyed. A Saint may be one-eyed or blind. Gods are handsome; Saints are always Bliss Incarnate.
7. The Gods look after them who call them; but there is no limit for the grace of the Saints. Gods say 'thus far and no futher'; but Saints are compassionate even to those who speak ill of them.
8. There is no difference between Ram, Krishna and Sai. They appear as three, but in essence they are only one.
9. To say that all these three faced death, is in itself totally incorrect. He who has power over death, how can he be troubled by it?
10. We are unaware of the merits and demerits of former existence which have occasioned the present birth. Nor am I aware of the good and

bad done during the present life. Sai, *Gururaya* is merciful. Knowing this, I plead for his mercy.

11. There are many waves of desire which arise, whereby there is no peace of mind. Without your grace, the mind will not reach quietude.
12. In the beginning of the last chapter, I had promised to narrate somethings which I could not keep. I could not fully narrate them. Listen to it completely, from the beginning to the end.
13. Knowing that the end was near, Baba listened with full attention to the *Ramayan*, for fourteen days, day and night, read by a *Brahmin*.
14. Thus two weeks passed listening to the *Ramayan*. When *Vijayadashmi* day arrived Baba left the body.
15. In the last chapter, it was narrated how Lakshman *Mama* did the *puja* and how Jog did the *arati*, after Baba's passing away.
16. After that the Hindus and the Muslims needed thirty-six hours to decide upon the last rites for the body;
17. How the place for the *Samadhi* was decided upon; how the BRICK had unexpectedly broken; and how in the past, Baba had raised his *prana* high up for three days.
18. Everybody had doubts whether it was *Samadhi* or the abandoning of the body. By observing the absence of breath it seemed doubtful if he would become normal.
19. When three days had passed thus, it seemed certain that he had abandoned the body. Then, naturally, all raised the subject of the last rites.
20. Then, at that time, Baba who was fully conscious internally returned to his normal self suddenly and warded off the worries of the people.
21. Listen to many such stories with loving devotion. You will be delighted and choked with emotion.
22. It is not a story but a treasury of invaluable Sai gems. Open with love, and experience the bliss of *darshan*.
23. In this whole chapter, you will see Sainath densely filling it. By listening to it you will be fulfilled. By recalling it, you will have a protector.
24. This is the story of that Sai, who was most generous. Get ready to listen to it with a loving and undisturbed mind.
25. Hearing such a pious story never fulfils the craving of the devotees; but they are filled with spiritual bliss and those that are troubled by worldly problems, find repose.

26. Such is this story of Sai that it gives the happiness of a contented mind. Self Bliss seems to be standing before us and one experiences the purest joy of all the joys.

27. It appears fresh and new, no matter how often you hear it. Its characteristic is that it is enchanting. Therefore, listen to this story of the Saint with a pure and concentrated mind.

28. So be it. Later on, the discussions about the last rites for the body went on endlessly and everyone was tired. Listen to the final outcome.

29. It was finally decided to place Baba's body at the site designated for the statue of Lord Krishna (Murlidhar) in the sanctum of the hall of Butti's *wada*.

30. Earlier, when the foundation was being dug, Baba was passing by on his way to the Lendi. Baba had consented to Madhavrao's request.

31. Madhavrao gave a coconut in Baba's hands and requested: "Bless this place with your merciful glance as I am digging the sanctum for Lord Murlidhar".

32. Considering it an auspicious moment, Baba said: "Break this coconut. All of us, *Balgopals*, will spend time here.

33. "Here itself, we will talk of our problems, on and oft. We will be at peace with children and family".

34. At first everyone thought that Baba had spoken something casually. But when the later events took place, they realised that they had not properly understood those words.

35. After Baba abandoned the body, this was deemed to be the best place for protecting Baba's precious body. The idea of establishing the statue of Lord Murlidhar was abandoned.

36. Baba's last words: "Place this body in the *wada*", ultimately became everybody's decision. Baba himself became the Murlidhar.

37. Shrimant Butti and all others, all the Hindus and Muslims became happy with the decision and the *wada* was put to good use.

38. If Baba's body had been put elsewhere, that expensive *wada* would have been an inanity and been desolate.

39. It is because of Sai, today there is *puja*, worship, listening to holy scriptures and songs and distribution of food to devotees, guests and visitors.

40. It is because of Sai that abundant food is distributed there, various rituals are frequently held and people come from far and near and from different countries.

41. So, bear in mind, the speech of the Saints – study every word that is heard. Do not cast them aside, disbelieving them and considering them to be only casual.

42. However stupid they may sound in the beginning or appear doubtful, as time passes the meaning becomes clear even if they were difficult to understand initially.

43. When there was still time for leaving the body, many inauspicious signs occurred to indicate the forthcoming events, in the *Masjid*, in Shirdi earlier.

44. Out of them, I will narrate only one for the benefit of the listeners. Otherwise, if I narrate them all, the book will be lengthened.

45. Since many years, Baba had an old BRICK, on which he rested his hand, and sat in a *yogic* posture.

46. At night, in solitude, he regualrly took the support of the BRICK and Baba sat in a *yogic* posture, quietly in the *Masjid*.

47. This practice had gone on for quite a few years without disruption, and without any problems. But fate is not governed by any rules; and unexpectedly they are broken.

48. When Baba was not in the *Masjid*, a young boy was sweeping. With the intention of cleaning the dirt underneath it, he picked up the BRICK a little.

49. The time had come for it to break. The BRICK slipped from the boy's hand. It fell down with a bang and broke into two pieces.

50. Hearing of it, Baba said : "It is not the BRICK but my fate that has broken into pieces". Saying this, he was very distressed and tears of sorrow sprang from his eyes.

51. When the BRICK broke, with which Baba sat regularly in a *yogic* posture, Baba's heart was torn and he was choked with emotion.

52. This BRICK, which was with him since several years, was of long standing, and was the main support for his *yogic* posture. When it was suddenly broken it seemed to make the *Masjid* desolate for him.

53. Though it was a BRICK, Baba liked it very much and loved it like his own life. Seeing its condition, Baba was very distressed.

54. Baba spent hours together, resting his elbow on that very BRICK, sitting in a *yogic* posture. Therefore, he loved it very much.

55. "In whose company I meditated and was dearer to me than life, that companion of mine is broken. I also will not remain without it.

56. "The BRICK was a life long companion and has left me and gone away today". Thus remembering its qualities, Baba began bemoaning it.

57. A natural doubt may arise here, as isn't a BRICK only a perishable object? Why grieve for it? What would the people say?

58. Anyone would entertain such a doubt at the very outset. Bowing to Sai's feet I shall attempt to clear it.

59. The *Avatar* of the Saints is only for the upliftment of this world and the salvation of the poor and the sinful. They have no other mission or goal.

60. They laugh, cry, play like ordinary people but it is a drama. This is the secret of behaviour of the great ones in the world. Akin is the behaviour of the people.

61. Though the Saints are fully enlightened, desireless and without ambition, for the salvation of the people of the world they become ready for action.

62. Be it so. Thirty-two years before he actually left the body, the *samadhi* would have taken place if it was not for the wisdom of Mhalsapati which certainly and definitely prevented this inauspicious event. This is the truth.

63. If this said event had not been prevented, how would everyone have had Sai's companionship?! Forty-three years before writing about this event, it would have happened.

64. On *Margashirsh Purnima* day (thirty-two years before the *Samadhi*) Baba had an attack of *asthma* and he became very uneasy. In order to bear this bodily pain, Baba raised his *prana* high up and went into *samadhi*.

65. "For three days from now I will raise my *prana* high up and go into *samadhi*. Do not waken me up". Baba told them.

66. "See that corner of the courtyard," Baba said pointing his finger. "Dig there for my *samadhi* and place me there".

67. Then looking at Mhalsapati, he point blank said to him: "Do not neglect me for three days.

68. "Place two flags at that site as an indication". Saying this, he raised his *prana* high up.

69. Suddenly he whirled around and became unconscious. Mhalsapati placed him on his lap. Others lost hope.

70. It was about 10 o'clock at night when this happened. Oh, everyone became still, thinking about the sudden turn of events.

71. There was neither breath nor pulse. It seemed as if there was no life in the body. The people were in a state of deep fright. But Sai was absolutely at peace.

72. Then Mhalsapati remained alert day and night and took care of Sai. He sat wide awake near him.

73. Though Sai himself had ordered that the *samadhi* be dug yet no one had the courage to do that.

74. Seeing Baba in a state of *samadhi*, the whole village assembled there. The people watched with awe and were subdued. *Bhagat* Mhalsapati did not remove the body from the lap.

75. The people would get a shock if they realised that the body was lifeless. Sai, therefore, seemed to have deceived the people by saying that the body should be kept for three days.

76. The breath had stopped. All the sense organs were at a stand still. There was no trace of movement. The lustre of his face had dimmed.

77. He had lost consciousness of the surroundings. He was totally silent. How could he come back to consciousness? This was the great worry for all.

78. Two days had passed but he did not gain consciousness. *Moulvis*, *maulanas* and fakirs came and gave their opinion for future action.

79. Appa Kulkarni and Kashiram also came. They took a firm decision that Baba had achieved his abode of peace and the body should be given eternal rest.

80. Some said: "Wait a little longer. Such haste is not good. Baba was not like ordinary people. Baba's words come true".

81. Others promptly replied : "How will the life spirit return to a body which is ice cold? How foolish all these are!

82. "Dig a grave at the place shown (by him). Call all the people. Perform the last rites on time. Make all the preparations."

83. Thus, while the discussions to do or nor to do went on, the time period of three days was over. Then, early in the morning, at 3 o'clock, the life spirit was observed as returning.

84. Very slowly his eyes opened, the body stirred and the limbs stretched, the breath re-commenced and the abdomen was seen to move.

85. His face showed a cheerful expression, the eyes began to blink, the unconsciousness went and a state of awakening arose.

86. It seemed as if he had been reminded of a body he had forgotten. The lost treasure had been found again and was freely available.

87. Seeing Sai fully conscious everyone rejoiced. By the Grace of God a great calamity had been averted. The devotees were wonderstruck.

88. *Bhagat* (Mhalsapati) looked at Sai's face, marvelling, as he gently moved his neck. The *moulvis and* fakirs lost face. In this manner, a terrible event passed.

89. If the *Bhagat* had not obeyed Baba's instructions, considering the ill advice he got from the *moulvis*, and had lost his determination even slightly, what a terrible situation it would have been!

90. The tomb would have been built (forty-three years before writing this) then, who would have had the pleasing *darshan* of Sai, which brought such happiness?

91. Sai arose again, leaving aside the *samadhi* state only to oblige the people and to grant satisfaction to the devotees.

92. He who toiled and moiled for the purpose of the devotees and then got immersed himself in the highest bliss, how could he have been awakened earlier? Inconceivable is his sport.

93. All the devotees were happy on seeing that Baba had regained consciousness. Everyone ran to take his *darshan*. His coming to life was a pleasure for all.

94. Be it so. To continue the earlier story of the final *Mahasamadhi*, complete details of which have been narrated earlier, it all happened as I remember.

95. Therefore, all you listeners ask your ownselves for a moment why should one be happy (that Baba had regained consciousness years back) or sad (that Baba had taken *Mahasamadhi*). Both emotions are caused by lack of discrimination.

96. Are you confident that our Sai is this gross skeletal body of three and a half arms length and the senses? Remove this doubt forever.

97. If one is to call that body Sai, then there is no name for the one who is free from all bodily and earthly enjoyments and pursuits. There is no form for it. Sree Sai is beyond a form.

98. The body is perishable. *Brahman* on its own is indestructible. The body is included in the five elements but *Brahman* is without beginning or end.

99. Observe the Pure, Excellent Self, the Supreme Being, the Life Spirit, which animates the gross senses. Sai is the name for that.

100. He transcends the senses. The senses are gross and do not know That. It is That which animates the senses and activates them with *prana*.

101. The name of that power is Sai. There is no place without it. All the ten directions are desolate without it. It fills the movable and the immovable.
102. It is this that has taken *Avatar*. Earlier it was unmanifest. Taking a name and form and becoming an individuality, it became manifest. After accomplishing its mission, it merged into the unmanifest.
103. After achieving the work of the *Avatar*, the body taken for the *Avatar* is abandoned and enters the abode of the Knower and the Known. Sai acted in this manner.
104. When he felt like going beyond the veil, like the *Swami* of Gangapur, Sree Narasimhasaraswati, who said "I am going to the mountains", he left suddenly.
105. When the devotees prevented him, he pacified them by saying: "My departure is in accordance with popular practice. I am not leaving Ganga Bhuvan.
106. "After bathing in the Krishna early morning and doing *puja* at Bindu Kshetra, worship the *padukas* in the *Math*. I dwell there always".
107. Similar is the story of Sai Baba. The leaving of the body was an outward act. Sree Sai is pervading the whole creation and the hearts of all.
108. Sree Sai transcends death. Never doubt it. One can experience[1] it according to one's devotion.
109. Sai fills the movable and the immovable. Sai is within us and outside us too. Sai is in your and my heart. He stays there permanently.
110. Sai *Samartha* is compassionate to the humble. He is the protector of the innocent devotees. He is hungry for true love and most loving towards all.
111. Though we cannot see him with our naked eye he is everywhere. Though he is hiding in a subtle form, he keeps us engrossed in him.
112. His leaving the body is a sham. It is a trick to deceive us. He is an actor par excellence, who seems to be non-existent but is eternal.
113. With the love and affection that we have for him, let us follow him and find him in the end. Let us fulfil our mission.
114. Worshipping him with heart and soul, remembering him with love and devotion, all the devotees will experience his all-pervasiveness.
115. The Eternal Ones are not afraid of birth, existence and death. They are Eternal and Enlightened. Emotions have no place there.
116. Gold is gold before it is shaped into ornaments and remains gold even when it is made into various kinds of ornaments.

117. The variety of ornaments can all be changed, subjected to modifications and destruction. When melted, there remains formless gold and only the shapes and the names disappear.

118. Therefore, this Hemadpant wishes to merge in this Gold, which is Sai, and stay thus till the end of time, at the feet of Sai, who is the embodiment of all the qualities of this Gold.

119. Then, the thirteenth day rites were performed by Balasaheb[2], the gem amongst the devotees, with the help of the *Brahmins* from the village.

120. After bathing, with the clothes on, and doing *puja* in the wet clothes, Balasaheb himself offered a palmful of sesame seeds, did other rituals with the seasame seeds, and also offered the ball of rice etc.

121. The offering of the ball of rice and other funeral rites were performed according to the scriptures at the specified times, including the monthly rituals for a whole year, as per the code of Hindu Law.

122. Upasani, a great devotee along with Jog went to the holy banks of the Bhagirathi and performed rituals with fire etc. (*Homa – Havan*).

123. They returned after feeding the *Brahmins* and the poor, giving *dakshina* as prescribed, and performing all the rites as per the scriptures.

124. Now it is different because of the absence of Baba and the discussions; still, when one sees the *Masjid* one remembers the good old days.

125. An extremely beautiful painting of Baba in his usual sitting posture was placed in the *Masjid*, with great love, so that one could have the same pleasing experience of how Baba used to sit.

126. Though Sai is no longer in the body, by having the *darshan* of the painting, it seems as if he is alive to his loving devotees.

127. Shamrao Jaykar had painted this beautiful portrait, which was very pleasing and constantly reminds one of Baba.

128. Jaykar was as great a devotee as he was an artist. He acted according to Baba's instructions, with due thought to his behaviour.

129. He was commissioned to make beautiful paintings of Baba, to put up in the homes of the devotees, in order to meditate on them.

130. Earlier, it has been explained several times, and you will recall it, that Saints do not ever die. It is not necessary to explain this again.

131. Baba is not in body now. Yet, one who remembers him is helped by

him even now, as in the past, when Baba was in the body.

132. If one does not experience something according to what Baba may have said, it should not be believed that this has happened because Baba is no more.

133. Baba's words are destined. One should have faith and experience this. If they do not come true immediately, they will do so in time to come.

134. Be it so. As I have mentioned Jog, it reminds me of a story which is a digression. Hear this unparalleled story and you will know of Sai's loving nature.

135. Though the conversation between the two is concise, it is illuminating for the devotees of a Guru. Fortunate is one who learns about *vairagya* (detachment); unfortunate is the one who is tied to the mundane existence.

136. Once, Jog asked Baba: "Why am I in such a state even now? How strange is my fate! When will I achieve stability?

137. Lord, I have been able to serve you single-mindedly for many years. Yet, this fickle mind has not found peace. Why is it so?

138. Why am I so unfortunate? Is this what I have gained in the company of a Saint? When will I enjoy the benefits of the company of the Saints?"

139. Sai *Samartha*, hearing this entreaty of a devotee, with great love replied to Jog. Hear what he said, with a calm mind.

140. "Your bad actions will be destroyed. Your merits and demerits will be reduced to ashes. I will consider you fortunate when I see the bag for alms under your arm.

141. "When you overcome all your impediments, and immerse yourself in meditation upon God, when you break all attachments, hopes and desires completely, I will consider you fortunate.

142. "When you abandon all worldly pleasures, consider duality as improper, control your palate and lust, then I will consider you fortunate".

143. Be it so. After some considerable time Baba's words came true. With the grace of the *Sadguru*, Jog attained detachment which Baba had predicted.

144. Since he had no children, there was no question of attachment to them. His wife passed away. Before passing away himself, he took *sanyas* and easily became detached.

145. So be it. This Jog was also fortunate that Sai's words came true. At the end, endowed with *sanyas* he merged with *Brahman*.

146. All that Sai had said happened in the end and the result was that he reached the exact state. Sai's words were substantiated. Truly, Jog was fortunate!

147. In short, Baba was compassionate to the afflicted and the poor and concerned about the welfare of his devotees. He offered them the nectar of wisdom in plenty, in Shirdi, all the time. Listen to it.

148. "Those who love me most, they see me always before them. Without me their universe is desolate. They have only my stories on their lips.

149. "They meditate on me ceaselessly; they have my name on their tongue and chant it repeatedly; and they sing of my deeds wherever they come or go.

150. "When they are so merged in me and forget all about their actions and omissions, and where there is reverence for service to be rendered to me, I dwell there always.

151. "He, who constantly remembers me after completely surrendering to me, I owe him a debt which I will repay by uplifting him.

152. "I am in bondage to him who does not eat or drink anything without offering it to me first and who constantly meditates upon me. I act according to his wishes.

153. "I constantly care for him who only longs for me and for him no one is equal to me. I act according to his wishes.

154. "He who has turned away from mother, father, kinsmen, friends and relatives, wife and son alone is attached to my feet.

155. "During the rainy season, many rivers in flood meet the sea and forget that they are rivers. They become one with the ocean.

156. "The form, as well as the name, has disappeared. The water has mixed with the sea. The river and the sea are enjoined. Duality is lost in unity.

157. "On achieving such oneness, the mind forgets the name and the form. It will begin to see me with its natural disposition, because there is no other place for it but with me.

158. "To expose to the people that I am not *parees* [3] but just a stone, the pedagogues with their empty sayings have brought pieces of iron.

159. When the iron came into conflict with me and turned into gold, it was proved that my being just a stone was a lie. It was a novel experience.

160. Discarding all pride, surrender to me who dwells in the heart. Ignorance will be destroyed immediately and there will be no need to listen to any instructions about knowledge.

161. Due to ignorance, body consciousness is born, which leads to sickness and sorrow. It is this which leads to the disregard of the code of conduct. That becomes the obstacle for self-realisation.

162. You may ask where I am now and how I can meet you now. But I am within your heart and we can meet without any effort.

163. You may ask who is in the heart and how? What are his attributes? And what is his identity by which he can be recognised?

164. Then, be completely attentive. Listen to the clear description to whom one should surrender, and who is the dweller in the heart.

165. The creation is filled in plenty with objects of different names and forms, which no one has been able to count. They are all the forms of *Maya*.

166. In the same way, indeed, that throbbing of reality which goes beyond the three aspects viz. *satva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, is really the form of the One embedded in the heart.

167. That state of being without names and forms which remains as the essence of your own is really the indication of that One, embedded in the heart. Knowing this seek refuge in Him.

168. One has to appreciate that I alone am 'He and Thou'. On extending this very idea of identity in the world of beings, there appears the weighty essence of one's own Self. There is no room for anything or anyone besides Myself.

169. With continuous practice, you will experience my all-pervasiveness. Then you will become one with me and experience that there is nothing beyond me.

170. You will be one with the Supreme Spirit and your heart will be pure. Without even having the waters of the *Ganges*, you will have had a *Ganga* bath (that is, you will be purified).

171. The wise are ever wary of the bondage of the pride of the worldly achievements and do not let it affect them.

172. One who meditates upon his Real Self, unwaveringly and does not break his concentration for him, there is no necessity of both – getting into *samadhi* or coming out of it".

173. Therefore, laying my head at the feet of the listeners, I earnestly request them very lovingly to have love for all, deities, saints, devotees and others.

174. Baba has repeatedly said: "If any one speaks insultingly to another, then he has hurt me only and pierced my heart.

175. "He hurts me immediately who speaks a volley of hard words to another; while I am immensely pleased for a long time if one bears an insult patiently".

176. Sai is immanent in the whole creation and he likes nothing else than love.

177. This supreme nectar of teaching, which was most auspicious, flowed from Sai's mouth always. This was because of his great love for the devotees. And which fortunate ones are not aware of it?

178. What must they be experiencing, after the sorrow had stung them, who had the privilege of eating, laughing and enjoying with him?

179. I had only the remains of this nectar from the wise one. But I gathered every drop and distribute it happily.

180. Can all the stories narrated so far be attributed to Hemadpant? *Samartha* Sai is their narrator, the writer and gets them written.

181. I am not satisfied with narrating this story of Sai *Samartha*. I am only engrossed in it and the listeners too are happy listening to it.

182. Besides, those who sing of Sai's glory or listen to it with true faith, both become one with Sai. Know this certainly.

183. Now, Hemad concludes this chapter and offers it to Sai, holding Sai's feet with love. The next narration will be later.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-fourth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Leaving of the Body by Sainath".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

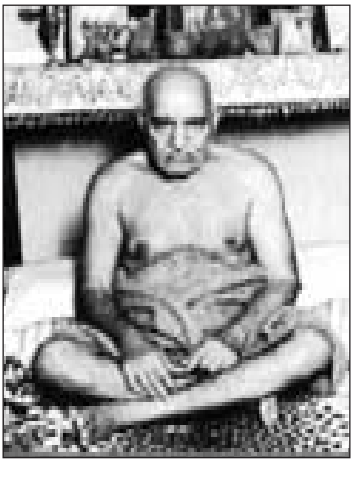
1. Once, a devotee of Sree Sai baba, Shri Moreshwaras Save was anxious to go to Shirdi for Baba's *puja*. But two days before the trip he became ill and was unable to leave. Therefore, he felt very sad. He became very morose and could not even sleep at night. But on the day of the *puja*, he fell asleep towards the early morning. *Maharaj* gave him a vision then and asked for *dakshina*. As soon as he woke up, he felt much better and was no longer disturbed. He felt at ease. Though *Maharaj* has left his body, he pacifies the distress of his devotees in some way or the other.
2. Balasaheb Bhate who used to mock Baba, as the mad fakir and who later became so devoted to him that he retired from service and lived continuously in Shirdi.
3. Stone which can convert iron into gold.

Shyamrao Jayakar

Shyamrao Jayakar had painted Baba's *Dwarkamai* portrait, which was very pleasing and constantly reminds one of Baba. (Ch. 44, ovi 127)

Balasaheb Bhate

Then, the thirteenth day rites were performed by Balasaheb, the gem amongst the devotees, with the help of the *Brahmins* from the village. (Ch. 44, ovi 119)



Upasani Baba

45

The Greatness of the Feet of Sree Guru

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. By the simple act of setting up the grindstone for milling, he who inspired the writing of his own story, how amazing was his skill! He thus brought the people on the righteous path.
2. Attaining the feet of the Guru is greater than attaining salvation which is the highest goal of life. Drinking the *tirth* of such a Guru will bring salvation imperceptibly.
3. Life can be happy only if the Guru is compassionate. The impossible becomes possible. He can take you across the ocean of existence in a moment.
4. Though the book is quite lengthy, I have narrated the stories briefly. Sai's glory is immense. How can I describe it adequately?
5. The finite form of Sai, whose *darshan* always brought satisfaction, whose company brought pleasure, and who removed the fears of worldly existence, is gone.
6. That finite form of Sai, who turned the devotees to the spiritual path and freed them from illusion and greed, and because of whom our greatest well-being was achieved, is gone.
7. That finite form of Sai, because of whom there is no fear of the world, because of whom righteous behaviour is awakened, because of whom, our minds were steadied in trouble, is gone.
8. Sai has gone to his own abode after impressing his image on our minds and ended his *Avatar*. This condition of his is inconceivable, which is achieved through *Yoga*.
9. After the *Avatar*'s purpose came to an end that perishable form was gone. Yet, this book will remind us of him at every step.

10. Besides, the peace and one-pointedness of mind that is born from listening to his story, is indescribable.
11. All you listeners are wise and I am dim-witted in comparison. Yet, listen to this *yagya* of Sai's words, with reverence and grateful minds.
12. This *yagya* of words is most beneficial. Making an ignorant person like me his instrument, he is completing his own work. The listeners know all this.
13. Whoever listens to this story, with concentration after bowing at Sai's feet, will find it most auspicious and supremely purifying.
14. The devotee who is possessed of real devotion and has his self interest at heart will savour the nectar of this story with concentrated mind.
15. Service never goes unrewarded. Sai will fulfil his aims and objects, be it for worldly gains or spiritual, and ultimately help in accomplishing life's desires.
16. In the forty-fourth chapter of the book, the final story of Sai leaving the body has been heard. Yet the book continues. I cannot understand this miracle.
17. In the last chapter, the narration about Sai leaving the body was completed very methodically. Yet the web of Sai *leelas* does not stop being woven even for a moment.
18. Actually, it is nothing to be surprised about. This Sai is beyond birth and death, and has only left the body. He remains without form, as earlier.
19. The body has gone and the form has gone. The spirit lives as before. The *leelas*, after he left the body, continue to occur. Everyone knows that.
20. Such *leelas* are also endless but to describe them all will make the book voluminous. Therefore, to avoid that, we will take only the essence from them and respectfully offer them to the listeners.
21. How fortunate were we that when Sai manifested himself, we got his company, at that time, most easily!
22. And, how disgraceful it would have been if we would not have attained detachment from the world or not gained deep devotion to God!
23. To be devoted to Sai with all the senses is the true state of worship. Even while seeing his image with the eyes, one was unable to talk.
24. When the ears heard Sai *kirtan,* it was as if the tongue was enjoying the taste of mango juice. And when Sai's feet were touched, it was as if one did not wish to leave the touch of a soft bed.

25. Can he be a real Sai devotee, if he can bear even a moment's separation from Sai? How could he be said to be attached to Sai's feet, if he is unable to detach himself from the world?

26. If any man, except her husband, crosses the path of a woman, she considers him akin to her father-in-law, her brother-in-law or brother and bows to him with respect.

27. A *Pativrata*'s (chaste and dutiful woman) heart is steady. She never leaves her home and has boundless love for her husband. He is her only support throughout her life.

28. A *Pativrata* is virtuous and saintly. She never considers looking and meeting another man with a desire which is akin to having him as her husband.

29. For her, only her husband is her husband and she does not find anyone comparable to him. She has singular love for him. A disciple should also have this kind of steadfast love for the Guru.

30. Though I have compared a *Pativrata*'s love for her husband to the love for the Guru, it is really infinite. The good disciple knows its greatness.

31. Then, when there is no help in the daily life of someone, then of what help can that person be in spiritual matters? Whether he be the in-law of one's children, or one's sons-in-law or one's wife, no one can be trusted.

32. The mother and the father would be affectionate; one's own sons will think only of wealth and inheritance; the wife will think only of preserving her wifehood. No one would help in spiritual matters.

33. Then, who remains with whose help spirituality can be achieved? In the final analysis there is only self to count upon.

34. He is blessed who tries to attain salvation after distinguishing what is eternal or destructible, after foregoing the fruits of worldly or spiritual actions, and after accomplishing control over the mind, the senses and all the other six controls.

35. Thus, without relying on anyone else and having immense self-confidence, one who girds his loins, he alone will attain spirituality.

36. *Brahman* is eternal, the world transient. The Guru only is truly *Brahman*. Abandoning the transient concentrate on only the Guru. This constant feeling is a means of achieving spirituality.

37. Detachment is born from abandoning the transient. The *Sadguru* is *Brahman*, the Cloud of Supreme Bliss. The belief that God dwells in all will arise. This is called worship of oneness.

38. Whatever one constantly meditates upon, whether it is from fear or love, know that the meditator becomes the object of the meditation, whether it is *Kans*[1], *Ravan*[2], or an insignificant worm[3].
39. While meditating, there should be intense concentration. There is no better means than meditation. He who practises this himself will undoubtedly uplift himself.
40. How can there be life or death for him who has forgotten the desires of life and the world? He achieves bliss by being engrossed in the *Atman*.
41. Therefore, the chanting of the name of one's Guru gives birth to Supreme Bliss and the vision of God in all creatures. What else is the greatness of the name?
42. He, whose name has such great powers, to him my obeisance with faith and devotion. I come and surrender to him with my body, speech and mind wholeheartedly.
43. I will now narrate a story to the listeners which illustrates this. So hear it for your own benefit, with full concentration.
44. The late Kaka Dikshit daily read the 'Bhagvat' according to the orders of Sai *Samartha*. Everyone knows that.
45. One day, Dixit was reading the book, as per his usual practice, at the house of Kaka Mahajani at Chowpatty (Bombay), after lunch.
46. The listeners were delighted hearing the chapter in due order, which was the second chapter of the eleventh *skanda* and was excellent and unparalleled.
47. Madhavrao, Baba's devotee and Kaka Mahajani with him, had sat down to listen to the 'Bhagvat' with concentration.
48. Fortunately, the story was extremely interesting and fulfilled the craving of the listeners. It would develop love for devotion. It was of such excellence.
49. The interesting story related to the nine lights of the Rishabh lineage; that is, of Kavi, Hari, Antariksha and others[4]. It was both instructive and pleasing.
50. All the nine of them were God Incarnate. They were the embodiment of forgiveness and peace. When they expounded the glory of *Bhagvat Dharma* to King Janak, he was still and spell bound.
51. What is immense happiness? What is Supreme devotion to God? How can God's *Maya* be easily overcome except with the paramount help of the Guru's feet?
52. Deeds, non-performance of deeds and aversion to deeds — the secret

of all these is one and the same. Guru is God, in form. Guru *Bhakti* (worship) is *Bhagvat Dharma*.

53. Drumil Nath has explained about the characteristics of the incarnations of God and their deeds. He has described the form and beauty of Narayan by giving the indications of the human *Avatar*.

54. Further, Chamas Nath explained to Raja Janak the state of those who have a dislike for devotion and how there is total extinction for them for not following the code of conduct laid down in the *Vedas*.

55. God dwells in everyone, therefore, do not hate or envy anyone. See God in each and every form. There is not an iota of space without Him.

56. In the end, the ninth Nath, Karabhajan gave an exact description of which deities are to be worshipped and meditated upon in the *Krita* and *Treta Yugas*.

57. In the *Kali Yuga*, there is only one means of liberation, which is the remembrance of God and Guru's Feet. Thereby the fear of worldly existence is destroyed. This is the only protection for those who have surrendered.

58. After this reading from the book, Kaka Saheb asked: "How marvellous and wonderful are the deeds of the Nine Naths! Their conduct is inconceivable!

59. Fondly, he said to Madhavrao: "How difficult is this devotion to put into practice! Is it possible for fools like us to have that strength of devotion? We won't get it even after several births.

60. "How can these glorious Naths be compared to us who are born sinners! Is this devotion easy? They are the blessed ones because they are the embodiment of truth and knowledge.

61. "Will I ever achieve such devotion? How will I gain salvation? I have become despondent and feel unnerved. This life and birth are wasted".

62. Kaka Saheb was a loving devotee. He must have been restless to have lost his composure and become wavering. Shama was disturbed.

63. Shama, whose name was Madhavrao, and who was well disposed towards Kaka, did not like Kaka to be overcome by this pessimistic attitude.

64. He said: "If a person, who has the good fortune of having attained a precious jewel like Baba, whines thus, his life is futile.

65. If there is unwavering faith at Sai's feet why should he feel restless? May be the *Bhakti* of the Nathas was strong and powerful, but is not ours loving and affectionate?

66. You have been clearly instructed to daily read the eleventh *skanda* of the 'Eknath Bhagvat', with commentary and the 'Bhavarth Ramayan'.

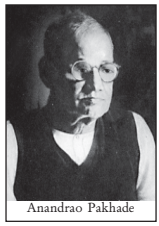
67. Also, you remember and chant the name of God and Guru, as instructed by Baba. This is the means for overcoming the fear of mundane existence. What is there for you to worry?"

68. But Kaka continuously thought about the lives of the Nine *Yogis* and whether he could attain even in a small way, their austere way of life, which was like walking on the razor's edge.

69. He kept on fretting that the devotion of the Nine *Yogis* was certainly of a high order and wondered with what means, he could achieve it so that he could truly reach God.

70. Enough. As he hankered in this manner, dwelling on this thought, all the time, even when he was resting or sleeping, a miracle took place the next day. The listeners should hear it in detail.

71. Observe the marvels of his experience! Early morning, Anandrao Pakhade came looking for Madhavrao.


Anandrao Pakhade

72. Madhavrao also came early to be in time for the reading of the 'Bhagvat'. Anandrao sat down near Madhavrao, telling him about a wonderful dream he had.

73. On the one hand, the reading was going on; and on the other, these two were whispering amongst themselves. The reader and the listeners were thereby disturbed.

74. Anandrao was describing his dream to Madhavrao in a lively and animated manner. Both were whispering, as one described it and the other heard it. The reading was momentarily interrupted.

75. Then Kakasaheb asked them both: "What is this wonderful matter about which both of you are so happy? Tell us also about it".

76. Then Madhavrao replied: "Only yesterday you had a doubt. Now here is an answer within no time about the characteristic of devotion to gain salvation.

77. Listen to the dream of Pakhade and how Baba gave him *darshan*. Your doubts will be clarified. It is enough to have devotion at the feet of the Guru".

78. So, all of them had an intense desire to hear about the dream; specially, Kaka, as it was he who had the doubts at the outset.

79. Observing everybody's receptivity, Anandrao began narrating his dream, in good faith. The listeners were also amazed.

80. "I was standing in an ocean in waist-deep water. There, *Sree Samartha* appeared before me, all of a sudden.

81. Sai was gracing a throne which was closely studded with gems, while his feet were immersed in water. I visualised such a beautiful figure.

82. I was overjoyed seeing such a pleasing form. The vision was so realistic that I never thought that it was a dream. My heart was full of happiness with this vision.

83. The wonderful coincidence was that Madhavrao was also standing there. 'Anandrao, bow down at the feet', he said to me, with feeling.

84. Then I replied to him: 'I also deeply wish to do so. But the feet are immersed in the water. How can I reach them?

85. How can I place my head on the feet when they are in the water? What should I do now? I am at a loss to know right away.'

86. Hearing this, listen to what Madhavrao said to Baba; 'Lord, draw out your feet, which are concealed under the water.'

87. As soon as he spoke thus, Baba drew out his feet. I held them thereafter, and bowed to them without delay.

88. As I held his feet firmly, Baba blessed me: 'Go, you will attain your welfare. There is no cause for fear'.

89. Baba also added 'Give a silk-bordered *dhoti* to my *Shamya*. You will profit thereby'.

90. Then, with profound reverence and humble submission to those instructions, I have brought a silk-bordered *dhoti*. Kaka Saheb, see to it that Madhavrao accepts it at your hands.

91. Please accept my request and see to it that Madhavrao wears it. This will give me great delight. I will be extremely grateful".

92. Madhavrao was himself listening to this strategy of Anandrao. When Kakasaheb gave it to him, he did not accept that cloth.

93. He felt that it was a dream and unless he got some indication or vision he would not accept the cloth.

94. Then Kakasaheb said: "Let us now ascertain the truth of Baba's words (in the dream). Whether it would be in order to accept or refuse, will be determined by casting lots.

95. "We will consider it as Baba's will depending on the lot that is picked." The lots were cast at Baba's feet with a decision to act as per the outcome of the lots.

96. Kakasaheb placed his burdens in all matters on Sai. He believed in consulting Sai before taking any action.

97. This was his practice during Baba's life time and he continued it even afterwards. He cast lots and took his permission and invariably acted accordingly.

98. Whether the task was great or small, without casting lots he would take no action, even if it meant losing his life. Baba's permission was always the means for arriving at the correct conclusion.

99. Once we have surrendered at Baba's feet, even the body is not ours. Then what authority do we have over its movement?

100. On the basis of this conviction, he had foregone the opportunity to earn lakhs of rupees. But he kept this decision firmly till death.

101. "Your faith will bear fruit. I will send a plane for you and take you in it. Remain without any anxiety".

102. These words of blessing from Baba came true in every letter. The readers of 'Sai Leela' know how Kaka's end came.

103. When one recalls how that came about, it was truly like flying away in a plane. What a beautiful death it was, with the Guru's name being chanted.

104. Such was Dixit, of firm resolution. He was always attached to Sai's feet. He taught his relations and friends to act likewise; and merged in his Guru's feet ultimately.

105. Now to continue the earlier narration. Both, Anandrao and Madhavrao, accepted the idea of casting lots because both of them loved Kaka. Then the lots were written without any loss of time.

106. On one lot it was written 'Accept the *dhoti*' and on the other 'Reject It'. After having written thus, they were placed at Sai's feet, under the painting.

107. A child, who was present there was asked to pick up one. Madhavrao got the instruction to accept the *dhoti*.

108. The lot confirmed what was said in the dream. All were pleased. Then, the *dhoti* with the silk border was placed in Shama's hands.

109. When the lot validated what was said in this dream, they were unable to contain their joy. Both of them were happy and contented.

110. Madhavrao was happy within himself. Also, Anandrao was contented. Devotion to Sai was promoted. Kaka's doubts were clarified.

111. Enough. One should think for himself about the essence of this whole story. Once there is a surrender to the Guru, then one must follow the Guru's instructions.

112. The Guru knows better than us, from head to toe, our stage of development, our part in life, and our inclinations. He is the means of the final salvation.

113. The diagnosis depends on the disease and accordingly the medications and antidotes are given. The *Sadguru* always lays down what is suitable for the disciple's sickness of existence to be cured.

114. Do not imitate the Guru and the way in which the Guru conducts himself. Only revere and obey the instructions that he gives you.

115. Concentrate on his words. Meditate upon them regularly. Bear it in mind that those words will be the cause of your upliftment.

116. What the Guru says, is the holy book as well as the 'Puran' ; really consists of his words, amounting to his explanation. So give attention to his main instructions. That is the word of the *Vedas* for us.

117. Do not disparage the words of any Saint. But no one can care better for us than our own mother (our own Guru).

118. The true heart's affection and tenderness that a mother has for the child is unknown to it and it does not derive the kind of satisfaction that she gets from it. The child just receives her indulgence.

119. Carve out on your heart these kind words of Sai: "There are innumerable saints in the world, but our father (Guru) is the Father (Real Guru)".

120. Therefore, pay attention to Sai's own words. Ultimately, he the treasure house of mercy, will remove your three-fold calamities.

121. He alone knows his skills. It is for us only to watch and wonder. How marvellous are his *leelas* which he performs for us easily!

122. Listen to whatever anyone else says. But do not let it divert your attention. Do not forget your own Guru's words.

123. In this lies your ultimate welfare. This will remove your fear of conditioned existence and help to cross the worldly ocean. All the scriptures are contained in them. It is all your prescribed way of worship.

124. In short, love your Guru; whole-heartedly surrender to him. Just as there is no darkness before the sun, there is no sea of mundane existence for you to cross.

125. Wherever you are in the world, near or however far, even beyond the seven seas, the Guru is extremely loving towards the devotee.

126. Enough. While writing this, I am reminded of a story, how when one imitates another, he brings difficulties upon himself.

127. Once when Baba was in the *Masjid* with Mhalsapati, he was suddenly reminded of his earlier plank bed.

128. It was not more than a foot in width. He tied both the ends with rags and hung it from the rafters of the *Masjid* and slept on it.

129. As he did not sleep in darkness, he placed earthen lamps at the head and feet, which burnt throughout the night. Then Baba slept on the plank.

130. The complete narration about this plank has been given earlier in a previous chapter. Listen now to its importance.

131. Once, when Baba was narrating the importance of this plank, Kaka Saheb got an idea. Listen to it.

132. He said to Baba: "If you liked sleeping on the plank, I will hang another lovingly. Then you can sleep on it with ease".

133. Baba replied: "How can I leave Mhalsapati on the ground and sleep high up on the plank? I am all right on the ground."

134. Whereupon Kaka responded lovingly: "I will hang another plank. You can sleep on one and Mhalsapati on the other.

135. Thereupon, Baba retorted: "How can he sleep on the plank? Only he who has numerous virtues can sleep on the plank.

136. "Sleeping on the plank is not easy. Who else can sleep on it besides me? He alone can sleep on it who sleeps with his eyes open.

137. "When I go to sleep, then I instruct him 'Put your hand on my heart and remain seated near me'.

138. "He is unable even to do that. While seating he begins to doze and nod sleepily. This plank is of no use for him. It can only serve as my bed.

139. "'Watch the chanting of the Lord's name in my heart by placing the hand on it. Wake me up if he finds me sleepy'. These are the orders given to him.

140. "Despite, this he falls into a deep sleep. His hand is as heavy as a stone. When I call out *Bhagat*, he blinks his eyes and stirs out of his sleep.

141. "He who cannot sit still on the ground and who is slave to sleep, how can he sleep high up?"

142. Therefore, Baba said on many occasions, "What is ours is with us; and what is another's is with him".

143. Inexplicable are the deeds of Sainath! Therefore, Hemad has sought refuge in him. It is he who has with his grace and blessings kept me constantly meditating upon him.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-fifth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Greatness of the Feet of *Sree* Guru".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Kans was Krishna's maternal uncle, who tried to kill Krishna.
2. Ravan was the King of Lanka, who kidnapped Sita and was enemical to Ram.
3. The insects and animalcules, class or order of worms.
4. The nine Nathas of the Rishabh lineage are Kavi, Hari, Antariksha, Prabudha, Pippalayan, Avirhotra, Drumil, Chamas and Karabhajan.

Sai was gracing a throne which was closely studded with gems, while his feet were immersed in water. I visualised such a beautiful figure. (Ch. 45, ovi 81)

The wonderful coincidence was that Madhavrao was also standing there. 'Anandrao, bow down at the feet', he said to me, with feeling. (Ch. 45, ovi 83)

How can I place my head on the feet when they are in the water? What should I do now? I am at a loss to know right away.' (Ch. 45, ovi 85)

As soon as he spoke thus, Baba drew out his feet. I held them thereafter, and bowed to them without delay. (Ch. 45, ovi 87)

46

Trip to Kashi and Gaya; Narration of the Birth of Goats

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Blessed are your feet Sree Sai! Blessed is your remembrance and blessed is your *darshan*, which frees us from the bond of *Karma*.
2. Though your corporal form is invisible to us at present, yet if there is faith and devotion, the devotees get living experiences. The spirit in the *samadhi* is awakened and becomes instantaneously visible.
3. By an invisible and subtle thread, you draw your devotees from far and near.
4. You bring them and keep them at your feet, and embrace them hugging them close to your heart, like a mother holds her child. You nurture them easily.
5. No one knows where you are, but you so skillfully pull the threads that ultimately they realise that you are behind the devotees, to help and support them.
6. The intelligent, wise and learned get entangled in the web of the world due to their egotism; but the poor, simple and devout are indulged by you with your power.
7. Inwardly and invisibly you play all the games, but show the flag of detachment. You do things and pose yourself as a non-doer. Nobody ever knows your ways.
8. Therefore, let us surrender body, speech and mind at your feet and always chant your name for destroying our sins.
9. You fulfil the desires of the desirous and to the detached, give the bliss of your abode. Chanting your sweet name is the easiest *sadhana* for your devotees.

10. By that the sins will be destroyed. Passion and ignorance will undoubtedly be wiped out. Goodness will gradually arise; and after that, the store of merits will increase.
11. Once righteousness is awakened, dispassion will follow quickly. The sense pleasures lose their hold and self knowledge manifests immediately.
12. Knowledge is reached due to discrimination. Then we abide in our Self and become humble at the Guru's feet. This is what is called complete surrender to the Guru.
13. The one and only sure sign of the surrender at Sai's feet is that the disciple becomes calm and peaceful and perfects his devotion with eagerness and joy.
14. Loving devotion to the Guru is the sacred law; ' I am That' is the essence of Knowledge; dislike for the sense pleasure is the supreme dispassion. Aversion for conditioned existence comes at that stage.
15. Blessed is the greatness of such devotion, which is performed with singular faith and devoutness, for peace, detachment and repute invariably follow that, as they are always in its power.
16. What can he lack who has such devotion to the Guru? He will have whatever he desires without effort.
17. Union with God comes in the wake of such devotion, as a slave given as a marriage gift. Salvation is not in doubt and holy places long to touch such feet.
18. In the earlier chapter, Dixit's reading of the 'Bhagvat' was narrated; also the devotion of the Nine *Yogis* was described and how the *darshan* was given of Sai's feet.
19. Sai devotee, Anandrao Pakhade, described the marvellous dream he had and the glory of devotion to Sai.
20. Whoever Sai takes under his protection, Sree Sai abides always with him, day and night, whether he is at home or continents away.
21. Wherever the devotee goes, in each and every place, he finds Sai has preceded him and gives him *darshan* unexpectedly.
22. I am going to narrate a wonderful, novel story for you listeners and you will be amazed hearing it. It will give you pleasure.
23. Listening to the words of Sai, in this story will make even the happiness of *samadhi* pale into insignificance. The virtuous devotee will be filled with Self Bliss.
24. Listening to this sweet story, where there is a marvel at every step,

will make the listeners forget themselves and they will be greatly overcome with emotion.

Ramkrishna Dixit alias Babu

25. The sacred thread ceremony of Babu, the eldest son of Kakasaheb Dixit, was fixed for performance at Nagpur.
26. The marriage of the eldest son of Nana Saheb Chandorkar was also fixed, for which it would be necessary to go to Gwalior.
27. Nana felt that there should be no delay on account of Kaka, after the thread ceremony was over, to go to Gwalior for the wedding.
28. He wanted Kaka to come from Nagpur to Gwalior without any stress. Therefore, he fixed such an auspicious time which would be suitable to both.
29. Then, Nana the foremost of the devotees came with eagerness to Shirdi for Sai's *darshan* and to invite him for the marriage.
30. Kaka Saheb was already there. Nana went to the *Masjid* to invite Baba for the marriage, with folded hands.
31. Then Baba said: "Good. Take Shamya with you". Two days later Kaka invited Baba for the thread ceremony.
32. Baba told him also the same thing: "Take Shamya with you". But Kaka Saheb earnestly begged Baba to come himself.
33. Thereupon, he promptly replied: "After doing *Kashi* and *Prayag* quickly, I will be ahead of Shamya. How much time does it take for me to arrive?"
34. Now, listeners, mark these words to understand their true meaning for they show Baba's all-pervasiveness.
35. Be that as it may, after lunch Madhavrao began to think that once he had reached Gwalior, Kashi would not be far away from there.
36. He borrowed one hundred rupees from Nandram (Marwadi) for his travelling expenses. Then he went to get Baba's permission to leave and asked him with great reverence:
37. "Since I am going to Gwalior for these ceremonies, I feel that it would be proper to take the opportunity to incidentally go to Kashi and Gaya.
38. "Therefore, Lord, I touch your feet and ask if I can visit Kashi and Gaya." Baba happily gave permission to Madhavrao to go .
39. Moreover, he said to him: "Why do you ask redundant questions? Whatever happens, in the natural course, should definitely not be missed".

40. So be it. On receiving such a permission, Madhavrao engaged a vehicle and left for Kopergaon. Then he met Appa (Kote).
41. Appa was going to Chandavad to bring his grand-daughter. When he heard about the proposed idea of going to Kashi, he jumped out of his *tonga*.
42. Though he did not have enough money to go to Kashi, he did not want to give up the company of a person like Madhavrao.
43. Madhavrao encouraged him, so there was nothing to prevent Appa Kote He got into the vehicle happily and quickly, taking advantage of the situation.
44. Appa Kote, Patil, was well-to-do. But he did not have any money for the travel. Therefore, he dreadfully feared that he would miss the pilgrimage to Kashi.
45. When the time is favourable, one should seize the opportunity. Appa felt he should definitely have the company of Madhavrao.
46. As it was, knowing his predicament, Madhavrao gave him timely encouragement and took him to Kashi, and fulfilled his wishes.
47. They went forward to Nagpur to attend the thread ceremony, where Kaka Saheb gave two hundred rupees to Madhavrao for expenses.
48. From there, they went to Gwalior for the wedding. Nana Saheb gave one hundred rupees to Madhavrao, at that time.
49. Shrimant Jathar, a relative (the father-in-law of his child), also gave one hundred rupees. Thus Nana showered his affection on his Guru *bandhu*.
50. Jathar was the owner of a beautiful gem-encrusted temple of Lakshmi – Narayan, at *Mangal Ghat* of Kashi.
51. He also had a beautiful Sree Ram temple at Ayodhya. He entrusted his manager with the task of welcoming these guests at both the places, with all courtesies.
52. From Gwalior they went to Mathura, accompanied by Oze (Inamdar of Palaspa), Biniwale (brother-in-law of Nana) and Pendharkar (son-in-law). These three returned from there.
53. Madhavrao and Kote went from there to Prayag; and entered Ayodhya in time for the *Ramnavmi* festival.
54. They stayed there for twenty-one days and spent two months at Kashi, during which time the eclipses of the moon and the sun took place. Then both of them left for Gaya.
55. While they were both in the train, they heard that there was a plague epidemic in Gaya, and that in every nook and corner people were worried.

56. By the time the train arrived at the station, it was already night. So both of them comfortably rested at the *dharmashala* there.

57. So be it. The *Gayawal* (priest who arranges and provides for the lodging and boarding of the pilgrims) came to meet them early in the morning. He said: "Hurry up. The pilgrimage has already started".

58. Madhavrao who was disturbed in his mind, asked him in a low voice: "We are coming. But has the plague epidemic affected your locality?"

59. Then, he replied to them: "Come and see for yourself. There is nothing of the kind there. Come with me, without any fear or doubts".

60. Enough! Then both of them went to the residence of the *Gayawal*. Seeing his large and palatial house, they were very pleased.

61. There was another reason also for their happiness, because where they had sat down they saw a portrait of Baba in front of them. Madhavrao was choked with emotion.

62. It was beyond their expectation to have a vision of Sai's portrait, in a place so far away as Gaya!

63. Madhavrao was deeply moved and his eyes filled with tears. "Why have you started crying?", asked the *Gayawal* of him.

64. As Madhavrao was crying without any apparent cause, *Gayawal* was full of doubts and was disturbed.

65. *Gayawal* became very disturbed, believing that Madhavrao was worried about the plague in Gaya and how his pilgrimage would be affected.

66. "I have already told you that there is no plague here. Yet you are worried. I am really surprised.

67. "If you do not trust me, why don't you ask all these others? Not even a hair on your head will be harmed. Why are you crying?

68. "Observe this pilgrim who is crying all the time, without reason, as he has been shocked by the plague epidemic and has lost his courage".

69. Therefore, Madhavrao tried to explain to the *Gayawal* what was in his mind: "How has my *Mauli* (Sai) come here ahead of me?"

70. "After doing *Kashi* and *Prayag* quickly, I will be ahead of Shamya", were Baba's earlier words. Here was the proof in the form of this portrait.

71. Seeing Baba's portrait in front of him as soon as he entered the

house, he felt it a great miracle on noting this unexpected circumstance.

72. He was choked with emotion and love; his eyes were filled with tears of joy; his whole body was horripilating; and he was profusely sweating.

73. This condition of Madhavrao had an adverse effect on *Gayawal* 's mind. He truly felt that he was crying because of the fear of plague.

74. Shama, then, out of curiosity asked the *Gayawal* : "Tell us in detail how you obtained this picture".

75. Later, *Gayawal* began to narrate the full circumstances that happened twelve years back to Madhavrao. It was a miracle. Listen to it.

76. The *Gayawal* employed, not one but two hundred to three hundred agents to note down details of the pilgrimages (to Gaya) at Manmad and Puntambe.

77. Looking after the comfort of the pilgrims was *Gayawal*'s business. When he was engaged in this work, *Gayawal* once went to Shirdi.

78. He heard that Sai *Samartha* was a great Saint. He decided to have his *darshan* and be purified.

79. He took Sai Baba's *darshan* and prostrated at his feet. There arose a desire in him to have a picture of Baba.

80. Madhavrao had a portrait hanging on his wall which the *Gayawal* asked for, and which was given to him with Baba's permission.

Madhaorao Deshpande alias (Shyama)

81. He recollected that this was his own picture and this was the same *Gayawal* . 'How did Baba send me here? And make me meet him after a long time,' was his thought.

82. Considering the fact that this had happened twelve years ago, how and why would it be remembered? He had not thought of it again at all.

83. But, Baba's *leela* was unfathomable! He had sent Shama there only; and, there only he had given his *darshan*. *Gayawal* was also very pleased.

84. Shama then recalled that this was the same picture given from his home to the same *Gayawal* after taking Sai Baba's permission.

85. The *Gayawal* remembered that he had earlier stayed with Shama, after arriving at Shirdi, and it was he who had helped him to have Baba's *darshan*.

86. Then there was no end to their joy, remembering their mutual

obligations. He looked after Shama with the utmost care providing all the conveniences at Gaya.

87. How opulent was his home, at the door of which swayed elephants! He sat in a palanquin and made Shama ride an elephant.

88. Taking all the essentials for the worship, they joyously went to *Vishnupad* [1]. They gave a ritual bath to the deity and offered *pind* [2] as per the prescribed procedure.

89. Later the Brahmins were gratified and given food also, after the offering of *naivedya*. The pilgrimage was happily concluded with Baba's grace.

90. The essence of this whole story is that Baba's words are significant. That can be experienced, word by word. His love for his devotees was immense.

91. It was not only love for the devotees, but he treated all creatures alike. He was supremely one with all of them also. He had excessive liking for them.

92. Sometimes on his way back from the Lendi to the *Masjid*, when he was casually walking, he met a flock of goats. Baba was filled with joy.

93. Casting a benign glance on the whole flock, he would sometimes pick one or two of the goats, and set them aside.

94. Baba would immediately give whatever price was asked for them by the owner. Then he would keep them at Kondaji's. This was Baba's habit.

95. On one occasion, Baba purchased two goats, paying thirty-two rupees. Everyone was amazed.

96. As soon as he saw these two, a sudden love sprang up for them. He went near them and patted them on their backs.

97. Seeing both of them born as animals, Sai *Samartha* felt compassion for them. Finding them in such a state, he was full of pity and a sudden outburst of love.

98. Taking them near him, Sai lovingly fondled them. All the devotees were surprised, seeing Baba's fondness for them.

99. Sai recalled their immense greediness in their previous lives. Sai felt love for them seeing their present animal birth. Incomparable pity arose for them.

100. When the price could have been two rupees, or at the most three or four, Baba had given sixteen. This was beyond understanding. Tatyaba was amazed by it.

101. The price was asked and the bargain sealed. Seeing this with their own eyes, Madhavrao along with Tatya scoffed at Baba's behaviour.
102. Why did he give sixteen rupees for goods worth two rupees? Did Baba have no value for money? Or is it that he acted as per his will? Even this argument was not tenable.
103. Both were greatly fuming and fretting. Why did Baba conclude such a bargain? Both of them blamed Baba. What kind of bargain was this?
104. How was Baba so deceived? All the people gathered there to see this. Baba remained calm, as if nothing was lost.
105. Though both of them were thus angry and blamed Baba, he was not at all moved. He remained unmoved and peacefully blissful.
106. Then, with respect and humility both of them asked Baba: "What type of generosity is this? Thirty-two rupees have been wasted!"
107. It was only a question of money! Sai smiled when he heard it, and thought: 'How should I convince these mad people?'
108. But Baba's composure was remarkable. Not a jot of his firmness was shaken. This is the sign of ultimate peace. All the people were surprised.
109. How could foolishness ever touch the one who has not a trace of anger, experiences supreme peace and sees God in all creatures?
110. One who is competent of correct judgement does not permit anger to approach. If by chance it happens the treasure of peace is unlocked.
111. How can I describe the greatness of him, whose constant thought was '*Allah-Malik*'? How life was deep, unfathomable, very pure and beneficial.
112. He who was the womb of knowledge, the treasure of discrimination, ocean of Self Bliss, and whose intellect was overflowing with mercy, thrice purified spoke thus. Listen to it.
113. Seeing the persistence of both, Baba decided to explain : "When I do not have a place to sit or a home, then why should I accumulate money".
114. Further, he said: "Go to the shop first and bring lentils after purchasing them. Give them one seer of it to their heart's satisfaction. Then, give them back to the herdsman".
115. According to the instructions, they immediately gave lentils to the goats to eat. Then without losing any time, they were returned to the flock.
116. This Sai *Avatar* is clearly the embodiment of benevolence. What

could Tatya, Shama or anyone else suggest to him in the way of noble thoughts?

117. After feeding them lentils with great love and observing that they were well satisfied, he asked them to be taken to the owner, so that they could rest with the herd.

118. Thus the money was spent and the goats were returned – it was a loss making transaction. Then, Sai Baba told an unusual story of their past births.

119. Baba loved both Tatya and Shama alike. To cool their anger he told them a charming story.

120. Sai, on his own narrated the story of the previous births of the goats. Listeners, hear it also.

121. "They were fortunate in their past lives. They were human beings then, and stayed near me. They had to bear the fruits of their action.

122. These, that you see as goats, were brothers in their past lives. Their end came because of their in-fighting. This brought such a result.

123. At first, there was love between the brothers. They usually ate and slept together and were concerned about each other's welfare. There was great unity between them.

124. Though they were real brothers, they had great greed for money, which brought enmity between them, because of their own deeds and fate coming together, which brought immense suffering.

125. The older brother was very lazy. The younger was always industrious, which helped to accumulate wealth. The elder brother was filled with envy.

126. The elder, because of his greed for money, nursed wrong thoughts of removing the thorn from his path, so that he would not lack money.

127. Greed for money became an obstacle, and he was blinded by it, despite having eyes. He totally forgot brotherly love and became ready to kill him.

128. It is extremely difficult to fight destiny. Enmity arose without cause. They came to know each other's duplicity and greed could not be controlled.

129. Their life span had ended. They totally forgot brotherly love. They were greatly agitated by offensive pride. They fought like enemies.

130. One injured the head of the other with a big stick and he fell down. The other, with the help of an axe, likewise hit his brother.

131. Then both of them fell down unconscious, shattered in a pool of blood. After a little while, they were without breath, and both died.

132. Thus came their end. They were then born in this form of life. Such is their story, of which I was reminded in detail when I saw them.

133. To undergo the effects of their past actions, they were reborn as goats. Seeing them unexpectedly in the herd, I was overcome with love.

134. Therefore, spending money from my own pocket I thought of giving them refuge. You became the instrument by which their past actions stood in the way.

135. I felt compassion towards the goats. But because of your insistence, I also agreed finally to return them to the herdsman".

136. Be it so. The story ends here. Listeners, forgive me. Later on, listen to the next chapter. You will be happy.

137. That also is full of supreme love. It is also the nectar from Sai's lips. Hemad humbles himself at Sai's feet and requests the listeners.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-sixth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Trip to Kashi and Gaya; Narration of the Birth of Goats".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. The image of Vishnu's feet at Gaya.
2. Rice balls offered to the deceased ancestors.

Nanda Deep in Lendi Bagh

47

Narration of Story told by Sree Sai

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Blessed is Sree Sai's visage. One glimpse of his visage removes the miseries of many lives. It is the perennial source of Bliss.
2. One merciful glance immediately breaks all the bondages of past actions (*karmas*). His devotees attain the favour of Self-Bliss, within a moment.
3. With a merciful glance from him, the perplexities of past omissions and commissions are dissipated. His grace is like the light of the sun in which the glow of the fire-flies fade.
4. The Bhagirathi (river) washes the sins of the world whereby she herself becomes impure. She longs for the dust of the feet of the Saints to destroy her own accumulated impurity.
5. 'When will the feet of the Saints touch me? When will they come to bathe in me? Without them, my sins will not be cleansed'. She definitely knows that.
6. *Samartha* Sai is the crest jewel of such Saints. Knowing that these are his words, devoted and virtuous people hear this purifying story, with great reverence.
7. The greatness of the story is marvellous. The bonds of *karma* of the listeners, whether they are wise or ignorant, will be broken. This is a very holy story.
8. The faculty of the vision of all the eyes and the faculty of hearing of all the ears is Sai. He, himself, has entered my heart and narrated this story.
9. Sai is himself eminently learned. Hearing the marvel of this story, the listeners will forget their ego and will be filled with the eight *satvik* feelings[1].

10. Paying attention to the intent of this story from Sai, keeping an eye on the moral, listeners will achieve the objects of their endeavours.
11. But listeners hear my plea. Though I am the narrator of this story, I will be as vacuous as you are, not having understood the essence, if I do not concentrate.
12. When I remember his love for his devotees, my mind forgets its nature and I am at peace, notwithstanding the problems of the worldly life. What greater benefit could there be?
13. Listen to this story with attention, which is connected with the previous one. Listening to the story without interruption will bring satisfaction.
14. In the end of the previous chapter, the listeners heard the story of the goats and Baba's love for them, on remembering their past lives.
15. This story is similar to it, about how the intense greed for money leads to a downfall. Listen to it with concentration.
16. It is only Sai, with his utmost grace, who suggests the stories, one after another, so that there is no break for the listeners, and increases happiness and contentment.
17. Sai *Samartha*, himself, is the story, the narrator and the narration. Why and how is Hemad there? It is only the assumed name.
18. When I am sitting on the shores of an ocean of Sai stories, how can there be a shortage of them? Sitting under the wish-fulfilling tree, no sooner the wishes arise than they are fulfilled.
19. Who worries about a lamp in the abode of the sun? One who drinks nectar, regularly, would he drink poison?
20. When there is someone like Sai, as our protector, can there be a shortage of the nectar of stories? Savour them to your hearts' content, with pleasure.
21. The doctrine of *karmas* is incomprehensible. No one is able to understand it thoroughly. Even the very wise ones are baffled; but the devoted ignorant ones are saved.
22. Similarly, the laws of God are difficult to be understood. Who will transgress them? All we can do is to follow the code of conduct of the world, and do one's duty always.
23. Otherwise, it will be completely against the scriptures; and after death one is reborn in a form which is in accordance with the actions in life.

24. In accordance with the deeds done and in confirmation with the sacred law, some, along with the seed and semen, enter the organ of creation, while some (others) enter static entities.

25. Births verily take place in accordance with one's thoughts. The real meaning of *Shruti* (sacred law) is not known to anybody. If there is to be rebirth, let the soul take it as it likes.

26. In order to be born again in a body, foolish and ignorant people should bear in mind that it depends on one's merits and they will acquire bodies accordingly.

27. Consider him to be wise, who before death, in order to achieve self-realisation, fully utilises the human birth.

28. He alone is free from the worldly existence; others get entangled in the movement of the whirligig, never becoming free from a body, or the miseries of birth.

29. Now, the miracle of this story is that the evil feeling that 'I am the body' is erased and the eight *satvik* emotions are aroused.

30. He who is a great miser inspite of immense wealth, his life can only invite scorn. Till death, he will experience a wasted life.

31. Added to it, if there is a feeling of enmity it will never be good. Restrain and control yourself from that. Otherwise, it will completely destroy a person's life.

32. Mutual enmity causes one to fall from a higher state of life to a lower. Natural evolution of life is destroyed by debt, animosity and murder.

33. I therefore narrate for the sake of the listeners, a story elucidating this principle, told by Sai himself, in his nectar-like speech. Listen to it attentively.

34. I am going to repeat the story exactly as Mother Sai narrated it and as I heard it and remember it.

35. Sai himself is the biographer, who gets the story written down in detail. Hemad, is only an instrument, of whom Sai is the controller.

36. 'One day in the morning, around 8 o'clock, having had breakfast as usual, I set out for a walk.

37. Feeling tired from the walk, I reached a river bank. I washed my feet and bathed, which refreshed me.

38. And how big was the river? It was of the size of the river in Rahata. There was overflowing water and bushes grew abundantly on its banks.

39. There was a foot path and also a road for vehicles. On the banks there was a thick cluster of trees, which provided excellent shade.

40. There was a cool and soothing breeze which delighted me. Gazing at the cluster of trees, I sat at ease in the shade.

41. As I was about to fill the *chillum* and for that purpose to moisten the cloth (*chhapi*), I heard the croaking of what seemed to be a frog.

42. It was no wonder as there are frogs always near the water. So I moistened the cloth and returned and took the flint in my hand.

43. When a spark arose from striking the flint, and the *chillum* was lighted and ready, a way-farer came and sat near me, after bowing to me.

44. Respectfully taking the *chillum* in his hands from me he said: "You seem to have travelled a long distance."

45. "The *Masjid* is far from here. It will become hot by the time you go there. My house is across the river. Let us go there after smoking the *chillum*.

46. You can have something to eat and rest a while there. Then when the sun goes down a little, you can return comfortably.

47. I will also come with you". After speaking thus, the wayfarer lit the *chillum* and gave it to me to puff, with reverence.

48. At that time, that frog began to croak loudly and piteously, whereupon the wayfarer asked who was crying out.

49. Then I said : "A frog has got into great difficulty at the river bank, because of its past actions. Listen. I will narrate its story.

50. We have to reap what we sow in our past life. One should endure one's destiny calmly. There is no use crying about it.

51. After hearing this, the wayfarer handed over the *chillum* in my hands and set out from there, saying: "I will go and see and return.

52. "Is it really a frog or some other creature? Let me see also for myself what is its problem".

53. Seeing that, that was his wish, I said: "Go and see and return. A frog has been caught in the mouth of a big snake and that's why it is crying.

54. "Both are very wicked and the deeds of both of them have been dreadful. The sins of their past lives have been terrible; and they have been born in another form of existence, to suffer the fruit of their action".

55. After I gave this opinion, the wayfarer went to that spot and returned after seeing what was actually happening. He confirmed the true situation.

56. "The snake is deadly with a large jaw. The frog too is frightful but it is going to be eaten by the snake.

57. "He has an existence for a short while. He has become an offering in the snake's mouth. What a strange fate! Soon he will no longer exist".

58. Then I said to him: "How can he kill him? After all, I am its father, here! Why should I be here then?

59. "Have I left my own abode and come here to permit that frog to be eaten? Watch how I get it released.

60. "After ending this struggle, we will go to our own homes. Go, go and fill that *chillum*, once more. Then let's see what the snake does".

61. The *chillum* was made ready immediately. The wayfarer lit it himself and taking a deep-drawn puff, presented it to me and I took it in my hands to smoke.

62. I took a couple of deep puffs and then, taking the wayfarer with me, went to that lush green grass and reached that specific spot.

63. Seeing that snake again, the wayfarer was frightened. "How huge it is!" he said, and clutched me with terror.

64. He said: "Do not go any further. The snake will come towards us. This place is too narrow if we decide to run. No, do not go there".

65. Seeing this scene, the wayfarer was afraid for his life. Then, hear this advice in respect of the enmity of both.

66. "Oh, Veerbhadrappa has not your enemy Bassappa yet repented, though he has been born as a frog?

67. You, too, though born as a snake still maintain bitter and mortal enmity? At least, now be ashamed; and giving up your enmity remain at peace".

68. No sooner than the words were uttered, the snake left the frog and fled by quickly entering into the deep waters. He disappeared from there.

69. Escaping from the jaws of death, the frog with a rebounding jump went and hid into the thicket. The wayfarer was filled with surprise.

70. He said: "I do not understand anything. No sooner than you spoke, how did the snake release the frog and how the snake too hid himself?

71. "Out of these, who is Veerabhadrappa and who is Bassappa?" The wayfarer asked for the reason for the enmity; and said: "Please tell me about it."

72. "Very well. Let us go and sit in the shade under the trees and smoke the *chillum* again", he said. "Then I will satisfy your curiosity and afterwards go back to my place".

73. We both came near the trees where the shade was dense. A cool, gentle breeze was blowing. We again lit the *chillum*.

74. The wayfarer smoked it first then handed it over to me. While smoking it, I told this beautiful story to that wayfarer.

75. "There existed a holy place, some two or three *koss* away from where I lived, which was ancient and full of glory.

76. There was an old, dilapidated temple of Shiva there, which everyone thought about renovating.

77. For that purpose, a large contribution was raised. A good amount was collected. Arrangements were made for worship and other rites and detailed plans were made for it.

78. A rich, local man was appointed as the manager there. The monies were handed over to him and he was put in full charge.

79. He was to keep a separate and independent account, and enter into it the cash contributions that were collected. He was to do this work without fail and honestly.

80. But he was a great miser by nature. He did the work in such a way that he had to bear no loss. Therefore, the work could not be completed.

81. The whole amount was spent but the work was only half done. He did not spend any of his own money, not even a farthing.

82. Though he was a big moneylender, he was miserliness incarnate. He spoke sweet words falsely, but did not put them into action.

83. The people who had contributed to the funds, gathered at his home and said: "What is the use of your position as a wealthy man!

84. If you do not solidly and financially support the renovation of the Shiva temple, how will the work be completed? Think of this.

85. We will appeal once again to the people and collect more contributions. We will send all the money to you. See that this work is completed".

86. Further monies were collected; and handsome amounts were received. But they were not put to any use at all. The rich man sat quietly.

87. So be it. After some time, the Lord decided to take the matter in his own hands. The rich man's wife had a dream vision, at that time.

88. "At least, you should wake up and act! Go and build the dome for that temple. *Neelkanth* will give you hundred times the amount you spend".

89. The next day, she described, in detail, the dream vision to her husband. For him, who felt that it was the end of life to spend even a farthing, this was most upsetting.

90. For him who thought only of amassing money, day and night, and had no other purpose in life, the meaning of this dream vision which involved unnecessary spending of money, of that how could he be convinced?

91. He told his wife: "I do not believe in this vision. I have absolutely no faith in it". And he started ridiculing her.

92. One perceives the world as per his own inclinations. Being a rascal himself, he saw others in the same plight.

93. "If God intended that my money should be spent, was I far away from you? Why did He appear in your dream?

94. Why did you alone have this vision? Why didn't God give it to me? Therefore, I have no faith in it. I have not understood its meaning.

95. It is either a bad dream or it is an effort on God's part to create a rift between husband and wife. These are the only two alternatives that I see.

96. Am I not making sufficient contribution in the renovation work? Every month the bag that is filled gets empty.

97. People bring all the amounts. This is what appears to be true outwardly. But the accounting procedure for receipts and expenses is a commercial one. It is a losing proposition for me.

98. People are not aware of this. How should I explain it to you? Therefore, in this situation this vision of yours cannot be accepted.

99. If it is believed to be true, then we will be deceived. A vision that is seen when the sleep is broken, can it be believed at all?" The rich man propounded this principle.

100. Hearing this, the wife remained quiet and was unable to reply to her husband. Even though the people collected the money, they rarely gave it happily.

101. God does not like contributions given without love, due to pressure, under persuasion or coercion. A little gift given with love is very precious.

102. The work progressed depending on the money collected. When there was shortage of money, the work also stopped. In this way, the work got prolonged.

103. The rich man, being a miser, did not spend a single farthing from his own pocket. Listen to a further vision that his wife had.

104. "Don't press your husband to give money for the temple. Your devotion is sufficient to God. You give whatever you wish.

105. Even one paisa given with feeling and devotion, of your own money, is worth a lakh. Offer it to God after taking your husband's permission.

106. Do not unnecessarily worry. Offer whatever you like. Offer whatever little that belongs to you.

107. Here, only devotion is important. Knowing that you have it, God persists in asking you for something.

108. Therefore, whatever little wealth you have, give it and be at peace. To give without devotion is improper. God does not like it at all.

109. Anything that one gives without faith is worthless like dust; and in the end, will be futile. This will be experienced in no time".

110. Be it so. After having the vision, she decided to sell the jewellery given by her father and fulfil God's desire.

111. Then, she conveyed her decision to her husband, who listened to it, and felt dejected.

112. Where there is greed, what can be expected? There is no thought about God, righteousness and morality. He thought: 'What foolishness is this! She has truly lost her mind!

113. "After estimating the value of her jewellery, and fixing the price to be one thousand rupees, the land should be transferred to her name'.

114. He bought the ornaments himself. In lieu of the money he gave to his wife, a piece of land which was sandy and saline, which was mortgaged to him.

115. It was fallow land which yielded no crops even during the rains. He told his wife: "Offer this to Shiva (Pinakpani).

116. "When you give in charity this piece of land, worth one thousand rupees to God, He who gave you the vision, will be propitiated and you will be freed from your debt".

117. So be it. Believing her husband, the wife of the miser offered that land with love and devotion, to satisfy Shankar's wishes.

118. In fact, Dubaki had the ownership rights thereon, as she had

mortgaged it to the rich merchant from whom she had taken a loan of two hundred rupees.

119. Dubaki was a destitute woman who owned this land. When she had financial difficulties, she had mortgaged this land.

120. But the rich man was very greedy. Not only did he cheat Shankar but he misappropriated his wife's personal wealth. He was pleased with this deceit or fraud.

121. The intense desire for all sense objects is most evil, which destroys the life of one who is so attached. One should not get entangled in these worldly pleasures if one hopes to live.

122. The deer meets death because of its desire for hearing, the cobra is killed for the beautiful bead on its head; and the moth burns because of its love of light. Such is the outcome of having such desires.

123. To enjoy the worldly pleasures one needs wealth. Therefore, intense efforts have to be made to acquire it. And the satisfaction of these desires only makes them multiply. It is impossible to destroy them.

124. Undoubtedly it was a barren land and no effort could produce any crop on it. Such a land was offered to God. What merit could there be in such an offering?

125. It is an absolute or real offering to God only when there is no motivation behind it. If not, it is a sin whose fruits are ultimately painful.

126. On the other hand, the poor Brahmin who looked after the temple, was very contented that the land had been offered to God.

127. Be it so. After some time, an adverse event took place. It rained heavily during the third of the lunar mansions (*Kruttika Nakshatra*) and there was a frightful storm.

128. Suddenly, lightening struck. The building (of the miser) was razed to the ground leaving only the land without a claimant. Everything else was burnt to ashes.

129. The rich man was also attacked; and died with his wife. Dubaki also died. Such was the end of these three.

130. Later, this rich man was born in Mathura, in an impoverished Brahmin family and his devoted wife was born in the family of a *pujari*.

131. She was named Gauri. There is a different story about Dubaki. She was born in the Gurava caste, that worships Shankar, but she lost her womanhood and took birth as a man.

132. The naming ceremony of the boy was done and he was named

Chanabassappa. Thus, the status of all the three changed, and the previous *karmas* bore fruit.

133. The rich man, in the new birth, was named Veerabhadra. This is the essence of *prarabdha karma*, which has to be borne for it to end.

134. I greatly liked the priest of the Shiva temple. He regularly came to my home and smoked the *chillum* with me.

135. Then we would chat away the whole night happily. Gauri had grown up and became of a marriageable age. He used to bring her along also.

136. She too, was devoted to me. One day, the priest asked me: "I have searched all the places; but have not been able to fix her marriage anywhere.

137. Baba, I have got exhausted looking for a good home for her. All my efforts have failed. I have got tired". "Why are you unnecessarily worrying?" I said. "The bridegroom is on the way.

138. "Your daughter is very fortunate. She will become very rich. The boy will come looking for her on his own.

139. "In a short time, he will come to your home and fulfil your wish. He will get married to Gauri, as per your wish".

140. On the other hand, Veerabhadra's family had a poor household. He encouraged his parents to have patience and left the home.

141. He wandered from village to village, begging for alms and sometimes working as a labourer. He would sometimes eat only whatever he got and remained contented with that.

142. While roaming thus, by good fortune, he came to the *Pujari* 's house. It was an incredible *leela* of *Allah-Miya*! He was liked by all.

143. Gradually, the priest (*pujari*) grew fond of him and thought of giving Gauri in marriage to him. The horoscopes matched and the priest was pleased.

144. The priest, bringing Veerabhadra with him, came one day to me. Seeing both of them together at that time, I suddenly had an idea.

145. No sooner had the idea occurred that I expressed it. "If the present time is auspicious for a marriage, then give Gauri to him and become free".

146. After getting his wife's consent, Veerabhadra was selected as the bridegroom. Choosing an auspicious time, the marriage was performed in a proper manner.

147. After the ceremonies were over, the family came to me for *darshan* and also for my blessings for a happy married life.

148. I gave them my blessing with pleasure. Veerabhadra now had an easy life and looked contented as he was blessed with happiness and was prosperous.

149. He too became devoted to me. His prosperity increased with time; but have you ever come across a person truly satisfied and not hankering after money?

150. Money is a big snare! Even the very affluent are troubled by it. Veerabhadra also was disturbed at times. This is the game money plays!

151. Veerabhadra said: "Baba, this shackle of marriage is a great obstacle. Lack of money is causing me suffering. Say something which would remedy the situation and which would enable me to cope with my affairs.

152. "I prostrate at your feet. It's no good my deceiving you. I beg you to help me and remove my difficulty. After all, it was you who caused this marriage to take place".

153. I gave him a lot of good advice, and blessed him lovingly. "*Allah-Malik* is fully aware. He alone can remove the difficulty".

154. Knowing Veerabhadra's desires and that they would be fufilled, therefore I assured him and told him not to be miserable in any way.

155. "The time for good fortune is very near. Do not unnecessarily get restless. You will have money easily and you will have it in plenty".

156. "Riches seem to scorn me. My wife's requests for small things do not stop. Enough of this humiliation now! No more of this status of being a married man!"

157. Be it so. Later on something marvellous happened! Behold the influence of Gauri's planetary stars! The price of the barren land shot up. God's ways cannot be understood.

158. A purchaser came forward to buy the land for one lakh of rupees. He paid half the amount in cash and agreed to pay the other half in instalments.

159. It was agreed that he would pay two thousand rupees, with interest, every year. Gauri would thus be fully compensated in twenty-five years.

160. Everyone agreed with the deal. Chanabassappa, the *Gurav*, however made a point to say: "The *Gurav* has the first claim on whatever money is offered to Shankar.

161. "I should get half the interest as my share, as a *Gurav*. I will not accept less than that".

162. Veerabhadra did not give anything. Chanabassappa did not remain quiet. This led to a lot of arguments. Both of them came to me.

163. "Shankar alone is the Lord of the land; and it cannot be utilised by anyone else. Do not be entangled by greed", I told both of them.

164. "This is the price of the land which had been offered to Shankar. Any one else, besides Gauri, who makes a claim on it, will get nothing.

165. "Anyone who touches that money without the permission of God will certainly invite His wrath. All this belongs entirely to God.

166. "The ownership is vested in the *pujari*. Gauri is the sole heiress. No one else has any right to it. It is Gauri's own money".

167. Therefore, I told them both on behalf of Gauri: "Act as per her wishes. That will ensure your welfare.

168. "If you act against her wishes, God is not going to be pleased. Veerabhadrappa has no authority to independently deal with this".

169. When I clearly expressed my views in the matter, Veerabhadra flew into a rage with me and showered a volley of abuses.

170. He said: "Baba, by establishing my wife's ownership, you want to misappropriate the whole property for your benefit".

171. Hearing these words, I was stunned. The deeds of *Allah-Miya* are incredible! Why unnecessarily grieve!

172. After saying this (accusation) to me, Veerabhadrappa was very angry and shouted at his wife at home. Then, when she came in the afternoon for *darshan*, she began to plead with me.

173. "Baba, do not be displeased with me on hearing another's words. I entreat you, to continue to love me as a daughter".

174. Hearing these words of hers, I gave her a complete assurance: "I would confer so much happiness on you that even the seven oceans could not contain it! Do not grieve".

175. That same might, when Gauribai was sleeping, she had a vision. Shiva appeared in her dream. Listen to what he said:

176. "See, all this money is yours. Do not give anything to anybody. I am giving you instructions how to manage it. Act accordingly so that it is always carried on.

177. "Spend the money, towards the temple, as Chanabassappa advises. I trust him. Let this be the practice.

178. "If a need arises to use the money for any other purpose, do not

mismanage the money. Therefore, without consulting Baba in the *Masjid*, do not make any arrangements".

179. Gauribai told me the whole vision in detail. I also advised her correctly to abide by the instructions in the vision.

180. "Keep the capital yourself, which belongs to you. Give half the interest to Chanabassappa. Do that regularly. Veerabhadra has no claim on it".

181. While we were talking thus, both of them arrived quarreling. I tried very hard to counsel them to keep calm.

182. I told them, in detail, of the vision that Gauribai had of Shankar. After listening to it, Veerabhadra became insane with fury.

183. Veerabhadra showered lakhs of abuses on the opposite party, without rhyme or reason to his heart's content. He used abusive language which frightened and confused the other person.

184. He also became deliriously infuriated. He muttered curses and abuses. "I will kill you wherever I find you", he said.

185. Veerabhadra, in the insane fury, looking at Chanabassappa said: "I will cut you to pieces and eat them all up".

186. Chanabassappa was full of fears. He held fast to my feet and said: "Free me from this calamity". Then I gave him my protection.

187. Then, I told the humble Chanabassappa to have courage. "I will not let you die at Veerabhadra's hands".

188. Be it so. Later on, Veerabhadra had a seizure and died. Then, he was reborn as a snake. Thus there was a change in the bodily form.

189. Chanabassappa suffered from fears and apprehensions and died of them. He was reborn as a frog. That is his story.

190. On account of the enmity in the previous birth, Veerabhadra was born as a snake and pursued Chanabassappa the frog. In the end, Veerabhadra caught him.

191. Poor Chanabassappa, in the form of a frog, fell into the mouth of Veerabhadra, the snake. Hearing his piteous cries, I was moved.

192. Remembering the assurance given in the previous life, I freed Chanabassappa from the mouth of the snake and fulfilled my promise.

193. *Allah* comes running for his devotees at the times of their troubles. He has sent me here to protect His devotee.

194. This is what you have experienced. Veerabhadra was driven away.

Chanabassappa was rescued from his trouble. All this is God's *leela*.

195. Be it so. Fill up the *chillum* now. After smoking, I will leave for my abode. You too should go to your home. Remember me.

196. After saying this, I puffed the *chillum*. After enjoying the company, I returned, walking home. I was supremely happy.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-seventh chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Narration of Story told by Sree Sai".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Perspiration, Rigidity, Horripilation, Change of Voice, Trembling, Change in Body Pallor, Flowing of Tears, Loss of Consciousness.

48

Granting of Favour to Doubting Devotee

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Now, as I begin this chapter, one very curious listener who also heard me with great reverence, asked whether Sree Sai was a Guru or a *Sadguru*.
2. For his satisfaction I shall narrate briefly the characteristics of a *Sadguru*, which can match those to be found in *Sree Sai Samartha*.
3. Those, from whom instructions in *Vedas* is acquired, as also the knowledge of the six *Shastras*, or those erudite ones who have explained the *Vedant* are not considered as *Sadgurus*, by the learned ones.
4. Those, who control the breath, or have *Taptamudra*[1], or entertain listeners with their eloquence on *Brahman*, are not considered as *Sadgurus* by the learned ones.
5. Such teachers give *mantras* to their disciples conforming to the *Shastras* and also instruct them to do name chanting. But no one can confidently say when these *sadhanas* would bear fruit.
6. Their description of the Principles of *Brahman* is very interesting; the worldly knowledge is specious; but there is a total lack of self-experience. But that knowledge is hollow and only full of words.
7. When one clearly hears such explanations, one would loathe both, worldly and spiritual experiences. But the taste of self-experience is explicit and only a self-realised person can give it to others.
8. He who has full knowledge of the *Shastras*, is fully experienced, and can give practical knowledge, alone is qualified to instruct the disciple. Such a person is called a *Sadguru*.
9. How can he, who is himself devoid of self-realisation, give it to the

disciple? He does not deserve to be called a *Sadguru* who has no practical knowledge whatsoever.

10. Know that he is the *Sadguru* who does not, even in his dream, expect any service or profit from his disciple. On the contrary, he wishes to serve the disciple.

11. Only such a *Sadguru* is beneficial who does not consider that a disciple is insignificant and the Guru is the best among all. He should be egoless.

12. He believes that the disciple is *Purna Brahma* and treats him as his own son. He does not expect anything from him for his maintenance. Such a *Sadguru* is the best in the world.

13. He, who is the abode of supreme peace, has no pride of learning, does not distinguish between the young and the old and the rich and the poor, is the embodiment of the *Sadguru*.

14. Such are, generally, the characteristics of a *Sadguru*, which I have compiled and narrated briefly for the listeners who have completely surrendered.

15. What more can I say to those fortunate ones who have been fulfilled by Sai *darshan*? These are the true characteristics of a *Sadguru*.

16. Because of the store of accumulation of merits of many past lives that I attained the feet of this *Sadguru* Sai.

17. Even in the full bloom of youth, he had nothing of his own—no family, no wealth, no support, no home. He hoarded only tobacco and *chillum* and had strong determination.

18. Even at the age of eighteen, he had complete control of his mind. He lived in solitude always and fearlessly, always abiding in the Self.

19. Seeing the pure attachment of his devotees, his creed was that he was at their service. To explicitly demonstrate his love for his group of devotees, he lived with them, with fond affection.

20. Hail, Eternal *Parabrahma*! Hail, Helper of the Destitute and Blissful Countenance! Hail, Supreme Consciousness and One at the Service of the Devotees!

21. Hail, hail to one who is beyond duality! Hail, hail to one who is beyond attributes and with attributes! One who witnesses everything and is transcendental, One beyond the understanding of all who are not the devotees.

22. Hail, hail to the remover of the distress of worldly existence! Hail, hail to the destroyer of difficulties of those who seek refuge and have come full of love, *Sadgururaya*!

23. You have become invisible merging with the formless, but you act for the welfare of your devotees even after leaving the body.
24. Those who are devoted to you still have the same experiences as they did when you were in body, though you are now invisible.
25. By making this insignificant one the instrument of dispelling the darkness of ignorance, you have manifested the Sun of your Biography, which has the power to uplift the devotees.
26. To have belief in the existence of God and faith in Him— these are the heart-lamps that a devotee must have. Light the wicks, soaked in the oil of love, and the light of knowledge will appear.
27. Knowledge without love is formal. What use can it be to anyone? Without love there is no satisfaction. Love should be unbounded.
28. How can I describe the power of love? Everything is insignificant before it. If there is no deep love, listening or reading is fruitless.
29. In the wake of love, follow devotion, dispassion, peace and contentment together with liberation and all its treasures.
30. Love is not born without faith. Where there is faith there is God. With faith there is abundance of love and it is only faith which is the means of liberation.
31. The *Sai Charita* is as pure as the waters of the Ganga. He himself has adorned his *stotra*. Hemad is only the instrument.
32. Listening to the *Sai Charita* purifies the listeners and the narrator always. The merits and the sins are obliterated and both attain salvation.
33. The listeners who hear it are most fortunate; and so is the narrator. Blessed is the *Sree Sai Stotra* and it is very purifying for his devotees.
34. He who listens to the *Charita* with great faith and pure mind, will find all his desires fulfilled always.
35. Whoever listens to this *Satcharita* with supreme faith and reverence will attain devotion at Sai's feet, immediately.
36. Remembering Sai and serving at his feet with devotion brings the senses under control, at one's will, and the ocean of existence is crossed easily.
37. The narration of this *Sai Charita* is like the pure water for the devotees, who are like the *Chatak* birds. Listeners should meditate on it after hearing, so that Sree's Grace is upon them.
38. If the listeners hear it with complete and concentrated attention, the crossing of the ocean of existence becomes easy, after the bondages of *karma* are broken.

39. Be it so. The listeners must be wondering when the story will begin. I'll drive out their restlessness by giving an introduction.

40. In the previous chapter it was stated that enmity, murder and debt have to be repaid in the next life, for which one is born to bear the fruits of one's *karma*.

41. Those who have committed these sins do not remember them but the saints do not ever forget. They help their devotees to overcome their problems, wherever they are born.

42. Here is another story of how faith placed at the feet of a Saint, in whatever one does, brings benefits to his devotee.

43. Before commencing any work, if the Guru, who is God, is remembered, and due attention is paid to the work, then he will ward off his devotee's worries.

44. I will only be the doer of the action. *Samartha* Guru, who is God, will give the fruits thereof. One who firmly believes thus will cross the ocean of existence.

45. At the outset, the Saints appear harsh. But, inwardly, they have unselfish love. One should have a little patience. They will ultimately act for one's welfare.

46. When one is under the mantle of an association with a Saint, then any ill that is wished upon one, or any misfortunes that crop up due to one's destiny, or the illusions of this world are immediately annihilated. Therefore, humble yourself at the feet of a Saint.

47. Surrender to a Saint in all humility and without being puffed up with pride. Pray to him for your own, secret welfare and he will grant peace of mind.

48. Those who are proud of their meagre knowledge and doubt the words of Saints suffer losses; but later on, with faith, achieve well-being.

49. Surrendering at a Saint's feet, in good faith or deceptively, ultimately results in liberation. The greatness of Saints is incredible!

50. Now listen with full attention to a story which illustrates this moral. The listener will be overcome with delight and the narrator will be enthused.

51. Listen to the experience of advocate Sapatnekar, resident of Akkalkot. You will be pleased.

52. When he was studying for law, day and night, he met another student Shevade and they had mutual discussions.

53. Other class fellows also came there and got together in one room.

To judge the extent of their preparedness, they began asking questions to one another.

54. This was done to ascertain the errors if any, of one another, or the correctness of the answers, or to remove the doubts so that they would have peace of mind.

55. Shevade made a lot of errors in answering the questions. So, in the end, all the students wondered how he could pass the exam when his studies were inadequate.

56. Though they ridiculed him, Shevade had full confidence that he would pass at the right time, irrespective of whether he had adequately or inadequately studied.

57. "Even if I have not studied, my Sai Baba is there to ensure that I get through. Why should I worry?"

58. Hearing these words, Sapatnekar was surprised. Taking Shevade aside, he began questioning him:

59. "Oh! Who is this Sai Baba, whom you extol so much and in whom you have complete faith? Where does he reside?"

60. Then in answer, Shevade told him everything about Sai and his own faith in him, very frankly and clearly.

61. "In the well-known Ahmednagar district, there is a village called Shirdi. A fakir resides in a *Masjid*, who is famous and virtuous.

62. "There are saints in various places; but to have the good fortune to meet them is not possible unless one has considerable merit. Effort on one's own part does not yield results.

63. "I have full faith in him. Whatever he says will happen and whatever he utters will come true. There will never be any difference.

64. "No matter what efforts I make this year I will not pass the exam. But next year even without any effort, I will pass. This is the truth and nothing but the truth.

65. "I have his assurance. I have full faith in him, because his words will never be belied. I am sure of that.

66. "What's surprising about it? It will happen and I will pass in the next exam". Sapatnekar found these words ridiculous and hollow.

67. Since he was full of doubts, how could he appreciate those words? Anyway, Shevade left from there. Listen to what happened later.

68. Then, after some time, Shevade's words proved true. He passed both the exams and Sapatnekar was surprised.

69. Ten years passed. Sapatnekar got caught suddenly in misfortune and he became dejected. He was miserable.

70. In 1913, his only son died of diphtheria and he lost all interest in life.
71. He went to all the *Tirthas*, including Pandharpur and Gangapur, but he was not at peace inwardly. Then he read the *Vedanta*.
72. Some time passed in this manner. He waited for peace to come to him. While thus waiting, he recalled the incident of Shevade.
73. He recollected Shevade's determination and faith in Sai. He felt he should also go for Sree's *darshan*.
74. He thought of having the Saint's *darshan*. In 1913, a visit to Shirdi was organised and he left with his brother.
75. Sai was summoning him to make obeisance at his feet, by making his recollection of Shevade the cause or instrument. Hear this carefully.
76. Sapatnekar left for Shirdi with his family, and his younger brother Pandit Rao, for the Saint's *darshan*.
77. Thus, they both came there and started for Sree's *darshan* immediately on arrival. They had Baba's *darshan* from afar and felt very satisfied.
78. Though it was from afar, their eyes met and they quickly went near. Both of them folded their hands and stood waiting in front of Baba.
79. Both of them very humbly prostrated before Baba and offered a coconut at Sai's feet with pure faith and love.
80. When Sapatnekar offered the coconut at *Samartha's* feet, Baba said: "Get away!" with contempt to Sapatnekar.
81. Sapatnekar was full of worries. Why had Baba got annoyed? He thought he would find some one close to Baba and ask them.
82. Just as much as the *darshan* pleased him, these words had the contrary effect and depressed him. Hanging down his head with worry, he moved back and sat aside.
83. 'Now to whom should I go? Which devotee should I consult? What is the meaning of Baba's words? To whom shall I open my heart?', he wondered.
84. Seeing this state of his mind, somebody suggested the name of Bala Shimpi, for his satisfaction. His whereabouts were found out.
85. Sapatnekar told him the whole story and said: "Baba has despised me and used very harsh words.
86. "You, at least, come with me and ensure that there is a peaceful *darshan*. I only want Baba's merciful glance and do not wish him to be angry with me".

87. Thus, Bala agreed to it; and Sapatnekar felt relieved. Bala made him purchase a photo of Baba and then they left for Baba's *darshan*.

88. Bala Shimpi was with him, with the photo in his hand. Giving it, then, to Baba, he began entreating Baba.

89. "Oh Lord! Whose picture is this?" Looking at it, Baba replied pointing a finger at Sapatnekar: "This photo is of his lover".

90. Saying this, Baba laughed; and the whole gathering also was amused. "Baba, what is the secret behind this?", Bala asked Baba.

91. At that moment, Bala told Sapatnekar, "Take *darshan*. Act quickly". Then, when he made obeisance, he heard the words "Get away!"

92. 'The same earlier words 'Get away' are still hounding me. Now what should be done?' Sapatnekar was surprised and bewildered.

93. Then, as both of them were still standing with folded hands in front of Baba, Baba gave his ultimate order: "Go away from here, immediately".

94. "Sai *Samartha*, no one can ever disobey you. So what can be said of insignificant ones like us! I am leaving this very moment.

95. "Having heard your great generosity, I had come for the *darshan*. But I was welcomed with the words 'Get away', spoken with contempt. What is this marvel, I do not understand!

96. I had hoped for a merciful glance and your words of blessing. I hope that I will have your *darshan* again, very soon!" He asked for this assurance.

97. Who is so knowledgeable to know what Baba has in mind? But obeying his instructions, they returned to their home.

98. Such was their first *darshan* ! They were both, therefore, very dejected. They returned to their home, without any further delay.

99. One more year passed, yet his mind was not at peace. He went again to Gangapur, but his state of mind worsened.

100. Later, Sapatnekar went to Madhegaon for rest. Finally, he decided to go to Kashi.

101. When there were only two days left for their departure to Kashi, his wife had a vision and their journey to Kashi did not materialise.

102. I will narrate the marvel of this vision and its wonderful effect. Listen to it, right away. This is the sport of Sai's actions.

103. When she was asleep in her bed, she had this dream. She was carrying a water pot and was walking towards Lakkadshah's well.

104. "There was a fakir there, under a *neem* tree, with a cloth tied round his head, who came near me", she said.

105. "Why do you unnecessarily take this trouble child?" The fakir said in a sweet and tender voice. "I will fill up your whole pot with pure water".

106. She was frightened of the fakir. She took the way back home carrying the empty pot. The fakir followed her.

107. Seeing such a dream, she woke up and opened her eyes. Hearing his wife's dream, it was decided to go to Shirdi.

108. They left immediately and reached Shirdi, the next day. As soon as they arrived they went to the *Masjid*. Baba was at the Lendi at that time.

109. They sat there till Baba returned, waiting for his arrival. Then, shortly thereafter, Baba returned.

110. The woman saw the same figure that she had dreamt of, to the last detail; and she was greatly surprised. Then, she kept staring.

111. After Baba's feet were washed, this woman went forward to take *darshan*. After prostrating at Sai's feet, she sat down gazing at him.

112. Noticing her humility, Sainath was pleased. Slowly Baba started telling a story which would remove her anguish.

113. Then, as was his custom, Baba began talking about his own ailment, in detail, to a third person who was there, in a loving voice.

114. In reality, it was the woman's own story, as she would narrate it. It was told in her presence and she listened to it with great care.

115. "My hands, stomach and waist have been hurting severely since a long time. I am fed up of taking medicines as nothing gives me relief.

116. I am tired of taking medicines because they have no effect. But right now I am surprised to find that all the pains have disappeared, suddenly".

117. Such a story was narrated to a third person without mentioning the woman's name or indicating her. This was her story truly and it related to her only.

118. Later, after a month or two, as Baba had described, she was relieved of her pains. That was when realisation came to her.

119. The woman's desires were fulfilled. Then Sapatnekar took *darshan* and Baba again greeted him with the earlier words 'Get away'!

120. 'I do not know how I have erred! Baba has unfailing contempt for

me. Whenever I bow to him, he has only one answer, which is customary to him.

121. "It must be some accumulation of sins of my earlier lives which makes him angry with me. Right before my eyes, he behaves towards others with great love.

122. "The whole assembly of devotees seem to experience, mornings and evenings, a joy as if it were perpetually Divali. It is only my luck to be told 'Get away'!

123. "Some action of mine has aggravated him and caused me to be unrighteous. I am amazed. My sins must be multiple whereby he is displeased with me.

124. "In the beginning, I was vile towards Baba and full of doubts. I feel that this is the reason why Baba is using this method to put me in my place'.

125. Therefore, he decided that till Baba favoured him, he would stay there with a concentrated and peaceful mind.

126. Who has gone away disappointed without finding relief, even if he is suffering from the three-fold calamities, if he is yearning for Sai's *darshan*?

127. That day, he was very depressed and lost his appetite. He did not feel like going anywhere and could not even sleep.

128. He decided to find an opportunity when Baba would be alone on his seat with no one near him. He would then hold on to his feet.

129. No sooner than Sapatnekar took this decision that his determination bore fruit. Becoming emotional, he fell at Baba's feet and held them.

130. When he placed his head on the feet, Baba rested his hand on his head. Then Sapatnekar began pressing his feet, when a shepherd woman (*Dhangar*) came there.

131. As soon as the woman came there, she began pressing Baba's waist; and Baba according to his usual practice started talking to her.

132. The marvel of that story was that when Sapatnekar listened to it carefully, he found it to be the story of his own life, word to word.

133. Although it was the shepherd woman who gave the appropriate responses to the story, Sapatnekar sat spell bound listening to his own story and was amazed.

134. It was told as if it was the story of a grocer but in reality it was his, including that of his dead son and about death.

135. It was as if a close acquaintance or a relative was narrating the whole story, from the time of birth to death, in all details.

136. Though the story was being told to the woman, she had no connection with it at all. It was the story of the father and the son, and only concerned the two in all respects.

137. Be that as it may be. When Sapatnekar heard his own story from Sai's mouth, in this manner, he was greatly surprised and his reverence for Sai's feet grew strong.

138. He was very amazed! How did Baba know all this? But Baba knew all this as easily as if he were holding an *amalak* fruit on his palm.

139. When he was himself the Supreme Being, then the world was his family. He is all-pervasive in this world. This is Sai's attribute.

140. When Sai is the *Avatar* that bears witness to the unity of all beings, how can he differentiate? He himself is the whole universe.

141. With One who is one with God, how can there be a question of duality? The one who sees, the act of seeing and the object that is seen are not different for such a person, just as the sky is not affected by any colour or dirt.

142. Baba was very omniscient. This was realised by Sapatnekar. Good and virtuous people, hear now what Baba said to him.

143. Pointing his finger at him, Baba spoke these words in a tone of surprise: "He says that I have killed his son. He blames me for it.

144. "Do I kill people's children? Why does he come and weep in the *Masjid* ? Very well, I will do this now. I will bring back his son through his wife's womb.

145. "Just as the dead Ramdas was given back to that woman, I will bring back his own son in his wife's womb".

146. Hearing this, Sapatnekar gazed at Baba and awaited. Baba placed his hand on his head and assured him.

147. He said: "These feet are ancient. Your worries are over now. Have full faith in me. You will be fulfilled soon".

148. Sapatnekar was pressing Baba's feet when he heard these sweet words. He was choked with emotion and his eyes filled with tears. He prostrated at Baba's feet.

149. He was filled with the eight *satvik* emotions. His eyes had tears of joy with which he washed Baba's feet with love.

150. Again Baba placed his hand on his head and said: "Stay peacefully and without worry". Then Sapatnekar left for the place where he was staying and returned very happily.

151. He prepared the *naivedya* and handed it over to his wife. Then *puja* and *arati* was done. The platter was offered to Baba.

152. Water was sprinkled over it. All the rituals were done, like touching the water to the eyes, saying the *mantra*, offering the food to all the elements, etc. And then it was offered to Baba.

153. Then following the usual custom, Baba touched it with his hand in token of acceptance of the *naivedya*.

154. Then as the other devotees present prostrated at Baba's feet, Sapatnekar pushed his way into the crowd, and again did a quick *namaskar*.

155. Thus, in that hurry, heads knocked against one another. Then Baba spoke to Sapatnekar, serenely.

156. "Oh! Why so often do you do *namaskar* after *namaskar*? It is enough to do it once, with reverence and honour".

157. Be that as it may. That night, there was a *chavadi* procession and Sapatnekar liked it immensely. He lovingly started in front of the *palkhi* and delightedly carried the staff.

158. The listeners are already familiar with this *chavadi* procession. Therefore, to avoid making the book too long, I am not going to repeat it.

159. Later that night, Sapatnekar felt that instead of Baba he was visualising Pandurang. This was Baba's unfathomable *leela*!

160. Then when he asked for permission to leave (on the next day), he was told to eat and then go. He obeyed the instruction implicitly. Then, when leaving he went for *darshan*.

161. Then suddenly a thought struck him: 'If Baba now asks for *dakshina* how will I be able to give it?'

162. The money that he had was spent and only enough was left for the return fare. Therefore, he mentally prepared an answer if Baba said: "Give me *dakshina*".

163. He decided to give one rupee into Baba's hand even before it was asked; then if he asked, one more could be offered. If asked again, he would say he had no more.

164. He decided to frankly tell Baba that he had kept enough only for the train fare; and then he went to meet Baba.

165. According to his firm resolution, made earlier, he put one rupee into Baba's hand and he was asked for only one more. When it was given, Baba clearly told him:

166. "Take this one coconut. Place it in your wife's *sari* end. Then you go happily, leaving aside all worries of life".

167. Then, after a year had passed, a son was born to them. They both came again for *darshan*, when the boy was eight months old.

168. They laid the boy at Baba's feet. How, wonderful are the deeds of saints! Then, both of them folded their hands and entreated Baba. Listen to it.

169. "O' Sainath, how can we now redeem this obligation? We are at a loss to understand. We only place our heads at your feet.

170. "We are lowly, poor and insignificant. Have mercy on us, orphans. From now onwards, let us have refuge at your feet.

171. "Many thoughts and ideas trouble us in our waking hours and in our dreams, day and night. So fix our minds on your worship".

172. So be it. With that boy, Murlidhar, and with two others Bhaskar and Dinkar, Sapatnekar was fulfilled in their company, later on[2].

173. Then, along with his wife, he prostrated before merciful Sai. They attained mental peace and stability and returned after being fulfilled.

174. I had intended to tell this story briefly, when I commenced the narration. But Sainath is making me speak on, hence this chapter has lengthened.

175. This Hemad surrenders to him. Now let me give an indication of the story in the next chapter to the listeners.

176. That story is even more interesting than this. Sai fulfilled the wish of a devotee, who had a liking for miracles, silently.

177. When Sai's attributes are praised, there are people who are prone to find fault as they see them only. They have no motive for self gain nor are they attached to spiritual gain. Their only aim is to find fault.

178. "Sai Baba may be a saint. Yet unless he gives me some experience and unless I have some proof, I cannot believe in and accept him." This is what they say.

179. In the next chapter is the story of one who had gone only to test him but even his wishes were fulfilled. Virtuous listeners should hear it.

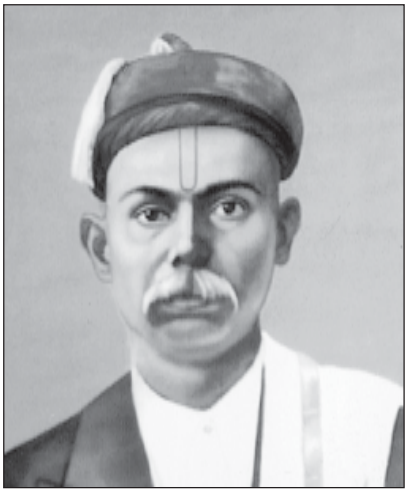
May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-eighth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Granting of Favour to Doubting Devotee".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Impressions made with a red hot stamping instrument, which maybe of copper, on their flesh, as done by the followers of Vishnu.
2. Lt. Col. M.B. Nimbalkar (Retd.) mentions that Sapatnekar and his wife Parvatibai had eight sons and one daughter. Baba is said to have done several *tilaks* of *udi* on Parvatibai's forehead and said that she could take as many children as she wanted.



Mahadeo V. Sapatnekar

Parvatibai M. Sapatnekar

"Take this one coconut. Place it in your wife's *sari* end. Then you go happily, leaving aside all worries of life". (Ch. 48, ovi 166)

Then, after a year had passed, a son was born to them. They both came again for *darshan*, when the boy was eight months old. (Ch. 48, ovi 167)

49

Testing the Saint and the Control of the Mind

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Where the *Vedas* and the *Puranas* have got exhausted praising the *Sadguru*, in all aspects, there I, an ignorant person, unenlightened, better be silent.
2. Really speaking, to remain silent, is, in essence the praise of the *Sadguru*. But Sai's attributes are such that they make you forget to remain silent.
3. Blessed are Sai's indescribable *leelas* ! When I realise that, I cannot remain silent. When I find the flavour of those delicacies to be sweet, I am reminded of the listeners.
4. I feel they must join me in partaking them, so that my own enjoyment is increased two-fold. This is my reason for arranging this feast.
5. If there are no friends or virtuous people to share them with, even the best of delicacies lose their flavour when one is alone.
6. Sai has had all his wishes fulfilled. Sai is the adornment of all the saints. Sai is the refuge of his devotees and the destroyer of difficulties of the whirlpool of life.
7. I have no words to describe his *leelas*. My speech is incapable of describing them. Inconceivable is he and his skills are beyond understanding. How can I know them!
8. He is the epitome of well-being. That Sai, by his grace, reminds me of his stories to complete this book. Know that.
9. I try to sing of his indescribable greatness but who is qualified to do so? When *para* [1] returns without doing anything, what can *pashyanti* [2] and *madhyama* [3] do?
10. When all the three do not open their mouths, what can the fourth

viz. *vaikhari*[4] do? Though I know that fully, yet I am unable to control myself.

11. Without being humble at the *Sadguru*'s feet, self-realisation cannot be achieved. Saints are the embodiment of the Lord and I seek their hand of blessing.
12. Love for the Guru's feet, this itself is the attainment of every thing. May the desire for the company of Saints, and the love for them be ours!
13. He who is full of ego is not fit to be called a devotee. He is a true devotee who is totally without ego.
14. One who is arrogant because of his knowledge, and vain because he considers himself great is only the personification of pride. How could he be a reputed devotee?
15. Unfortunate are the ones who do not sing the praises of their Guru, and those who do not hear them despite not being deaf are the embodiment of dull-wittedness.
16. Practising penance is better than pilgrimage, observing vows, sacrifice and charity. Worshipping the Lord is better than penance but meditation on one's own Guru, is the best of all.
17. Only Sai is the object of meditation for his devotees; only Sai is their deity for worship; only Sai is their hidden treasure, which should be protected but not in a miserly way.
18. If sometimes I am lazy, Sai who dwells in the innermost soul is not. If I forget the story, he gives me a timely reminder.
19. If I think of sitting quietly, I have no power to do so. The inspiration for the story arises so unexpectedly that I am compelled to take the pen in hand.
20. Thus for his listeners to hear his unfathomable story and for my own selfish reasons, he has made me write this *Satcharita*.
21. Even otherwise, the stories of Saints are created and written by them. If there is no inspiration from them, they would be dull and dry at every step.
22. So, merciful Sainath entering my mind got his book written by me and also thereby fulfilled my wish.
23. I am completely contented if I am constantly chanting Sree Sai's name, thinking about his sayings, and meditating upon his form.
24. Sai is deeply indebted to him who repeats Sree Sai's name, feels love for him in his heart and does all actions for his sake.
25. There is no better means for breaking the bondage of this world.

The story of Sai is very purifying and savouring it always gives happiness.

26. Use the feet to circumambulate Sai, use the ears to listen to the *Satcharita*, embrace him lovingly with your whole body and use the eyes to have Sai's *darshan*.

27. Come before him rolling, with eight-fold prostrations and place your forehead at his feet; use the tongue only to remember his name and use the nose only to sniff the fragrance of flowers that have already been offered to him.

28. Now to continue the story mentioned in the previous chapter of a devotee who had love for witnessing a miracle – I will narrate it, as promised.

29. He was not motivated by personal interest nor by any spiritual needs. He was ignorant of the greatness of Saints, yet if he was told of the glory of Saints, he would not believe that.

30. His friends told the stories of Sai. He heard them but always found fault. Unless they were confirmed by his own experience he refused to believe them.

31. His name was Hari Kanoba. He left Bombay on a journey, with his friends, to test Sai.

32. But who can definitely know the skills of Sai who illumines everyone's innermost self? They are masterly and unique.

33. Sai *Samartha* knew Haribhau's intentions as soon as he left for Shirdi. He was desirous only for a miracle and he deserved only that.

34. He gave him a taste of it and made him his devotee, making his journey worthwhile. Saints are truly able to devise their skills.

35. At Kopergaon, Haribhau got into a *tonga* with his friends, after having a bath in the Godavari. They left for Shirdi without delay.

36. After arriving from Kopergaon, he washed his hands and feet and then Haribhau set off to have a look at the Saint and to know him.

37. Haribhau was eager to have Sai Baba's *darshan* with a new pair of sandals on his feet and a *jari* embroidered turban on his head.

38. Then, when he came to the *Masjid*, and saw Sai from afar, he felt like going near him and prostrating at his feet.

39. But he had a problem with his sandals as there was no safe place to keep them there. Finally, finding a corner there, he shoved them in.

40. Then he went up for *darshan*, lovingly bowed at Sai's feet, took *Udi* and *prasad* and returned to go to the *wada*.

41. When he went to put on the sandals, he could not find them. After searching a lot, he returned without them, quite morose, losing hope of finding them.
42. There was a large crowd there, coming and going. So whom would he really ask? He could not think of a solution.
43. Thus he was in a disturbed state. The sandals alone appeared before his eyes; his mind was concentrated on his sandals; and his whole being was centred on the sandals.
44. He had bought them with great eagerness but the sandals were gone and lost! He felt certain that they had been stolen by some thief.
45. So be it. Later, he bathed, and after doing *puja* and *naivedya*, he sat down with others to eat. But he was not at peace.
46. 'The courtyard is Sai's! Who could have taken my sandals, after eluding Sai's eyes? Is this a small wonder?'
47. He was full of regrets. He could not concentrate on the meal. He came out, afterwards, to wash his hands.
48. In the meantime, a young Maratha lad came there, unexpectedly, waving the lost sandals at the end of a stick, like a flag.
49. The group of people were washing their hands after the meal. The lad was searching. He said: "Baba has sent me, giving me this stick in my hand.
50. "He told me 'son, go calling out for Hari, the son of Ka, with a *jari* turban and give it to the one who claims it as his own, and grabs them anxiously.
51. "But, first ensure that it is given to Hari, the son of Ka, and that he has a *jari* turban. Do not make a big hue and cry'".
52. Hearing the boy's cry and recognising his sandals, Haribhau ran to him, very surprised.
53. Haribhau's eyes were filled with tears of happiness and he was choked with emotion on seeing his lost sandals. He was greatly amazed.
54. He said to the boy: "Come, come here. Let me see. Bring the sandals to me". Seeing them he said: "Where did you find them? Tell me clearly".
55. The boy said: "I do not know all this. I am only following Baba's instructions. Whoever is Hari, the son of Ka, should show me the *jari* embroidered turban.
56. "I will give the sandals to him only. I will not recognise anyone else.

The person who satisfies these indications of Baba, he alone will take these sandals".

57. "Oh, lad, these are my sandals only". Though Haribhau said so, he would not give them to him. Then he tried to convince the boy with all Baba's indications.

58. He said: "Lad, I am that Hari, the son of Kanoba. These words are true in all respects. They apply to me, in every way.

59. "Now, see this *jari* embroidered turban. It will remove all your doubts. Then, I will be recognised as the owner of the sandals and no one else can claim them".

60. The boy was then convinced. He gave the sandals to Haribhau. His wishes were fulfilled. He experienced that Sai was truly a saint!

61. He thought: 'Though I have a *jari* embriodered turban, is it so novel? It is on my head and visible to all.

62. 'But I come from a distant place. It is my first trip to Shirdi. How did Sai Baba know that my name is Hari?

63. 'Kanoba is my father, and nobody knows him or has seen him. He used to be addressed as Ka. I am amazed.

64. 'Earlier when my friends told me of the greatness of Sai as a Saint, I did not believe them. I am now truly repentant.

65. 'Now that I have had this experience, I have learnt Sai Baba's powers. There is no room for doubt. Sree Sai, I know, is a very great Saint'.

66. One's experience is dependent on one's intentions. So was Haribhau's. He had a desire to test a Saint and had no thought of spiritual gain.

67. Friends and relations narrated that Sai *Samartha* was a very great Saint. The reason for going to Shirdi was to personally experience it or see a miracle.

68. To offer your life at the feet of the Saint so that you can find God, was not at all his wish. How far can the chameleon go[5]?

69. 'I had thought of seeing a miracle with reverence at the doors of a Saint. Now the pair of new sandals have been received by me in my own hands. (as if, at my own doorstep!)

70. 'Even otherwise, they were only trivial sandals. If they were lost, what would have been the loss? But, thereby, the mind's agitation would not have been resolved till they were found'.

71. There are two ways to attain the favour of a Saint. One is devotion and the other is knowledge. The path of knowledge is deep and difficult. The means of devotion are simpler.

72. If devotion is so easy and attainable, then why do not all follow it? For that, one needs to have the greatest good fortune. Then, alone, can it be attained.

73. One meets a Saint only after lakhs of meritorious lives. Only the happiness of association with a Saint develops devotion.

74. All of us just know about this daily existence, where there is attachment but we don't know what is detachment. When such is the state of mind, can it be called devotion?

75. We will be granted our desires according to the strength of our devotion. This is true for all times. There should not be the slightest doubt about it.

76. We who had gathered around Sai for material benefits, day and night, received such gifts. But those who came for spirituality got that.

77. Be it so. Here is another story. A person called Somadev Swami came in person to Shirdi to test Sai.

78. In the year 1906, in Uttarkashi, this person met Bhaiji, who was staying in a *dharamshala* or traveller's lodge.

79. Bhaiji was the well-known brother of the famous, late Dixit. When he was doing the Badri – Kedar pilgrimage, he met him on the way.

80. Leaving Badri-kedar behind, Bhaiji came down and came across several resting places on the way, and saw groups of travellers there.

81. Amongst them was a person, who later on became a well-known *Swami* of Haridwar, and who was destined to come under Baba's guidance.

82. This story about him is instructive. It will clarify Baba's nature. It will give pleasure to the listener and great happiness to all.

83. When Bhaiji was on his way for the morning ablutions, he met this *Swamiji*. While casually conversing, they came to like each other.

84. When Bua was in Uttarkashi, down the Gangotri valley, about 70 *koss* from Dehradun, that this meeting took place.

85. Bua set out in the morning, with a *lota* in his hand and Bhaiji also set out for the same purpose and same place.

86. At first, their glances met. Later, on the way, they made their acquaintance and inquired about each other's welfare with pleasure and contentment.

87. During the conversation, they began liking each other and inquired about each other's whereabouts.

88. "You live in Haridwar while I live in Nagpur. If perchance you come in that direction, give me the pleasure of seeing you.

89. "If you happen to come during your travels, purify our house and give us the pleasure, once again of seeing you and doing some small service for you.

90. "Please remember me and bring your feet to my home. This is my request. May the Lord grant it".

91. This conversation, in this manner, took place in the year 1906, near Uttarkashi.

92. Both of them, took down each other's addresses. When they reached the plains they parted ways.

93. When five years had elapsed and the time had come to be in contact with Sai, the *Swami* felt a strong restlessness to meet Bhaiji.

94. In the year 1911, *Swamiji* came to Nagpur. Hearing the stories about Sree Sainath gave him pure joy.

95. Bhaiji gave him a letter of introduction so that he could reach Shirdi comfortably. Thus planning the whole trip, the *Swami* left Nagpur.

96. When he got off at Manmad, the train for Kopergaon was ready. There he got into a *tonga* with happy anticipation of the *darshan*.

97. Wherever you go, the behaviour of a saint or his ways of living differ from one another. It is never the same everywhere.

98. The conduct of one Saint is not the same as another's. It is not the yardstick to evaluate their worthiness.

99. Why should one have this anxiety when one goes for the initial *darshan* of a Saint? If one goes only to watch their conduct one is depriving one self of one's welfare.

100. But *Swamiji* 's bent of mind was such that many conjectures and foolish fancies arose. When he saw from a distance the flags of Shirdi, his imagination ran riot.

101. All the other people with him, when they saw from a distance the flags fluttering over the top of the *Masjid*, bowed to them with love.

102. Though their hearts were anxious about the Sai *darshan* that they would have later on, yet they could not bear to disrespect his flags which they saw.

103. The *darshan* of the flags arouses a feeling of love. This is an experience known to all. It is a sign of loving devotion. There is nothing unusual about it.

104. But seeing those flags from a distance, there arose numerous fanciful thoughts in the *Swami* 's wicked mind. Strange was the nature of his mind.

105. 'To have a liking for flags, is this an indication of sainthood? To put flags atop the temple indicates a deficiency in sainthood.

106. 'If a Saint seeks respect in this way, it is just to gain popularity. I cannot appreciate the greatness of such a Saint. It shows his imperfection'.

107. In short, in accordance with his opinion the *Swami* took a decision about the appropriate behaviour of a saint and determined not to have Sai's blessings.

108. 'It is useless having come here', he thought. The *Swami* was greatly disgusted and definitely decided then to return from there itself, immediately.

109. 'It is a false pride to gain cheap popularity. Why does a Saint need honour? From seeing the flags, I can come to no other conclusion.

110. 'This Saint attracts people for his *darshan* by flying the flags to show his greatness. This is the very lack of saintliness. Why should I go for *darshan*?

111. 'What peace of mind can I gain by such a *darshan*? This is a show of flags of pride. I can have no satisfaction from this'.

112. He said: "I better turn back and go home. Seeing him does not seem to have been such a good idea. I have been truly disconcerted".

113. "Then, his companions said to him : "Why have you come so far? Why should these mere flags disturb you so much?

114. "Now we have come near (to Shirdi). How much more agitated would you be, when you see the chariot, the palanquin, the horse and all the complete paraphernalia?"

115. Hearing this, the *Swami* was all the more aroused. 'Not a few such *Sadhus*, with tom-toms, palanquins and horses, full of airs, have I seen!'

116. When he thought thus, Somdevji started to turn back. "The idea of coming to Shirdi was not good. Let me take again the road to the river bank".

117. Then, his travelling companions began to urge him : "Now that you have come so far, don't turn back.

118. "Let us go forward, as we have come. Do not have these malicious or harmful thoughts. These flags that are flying atop the *Masjid* have nothing to do with the Saint.

119. "This Saint needs no flags, nor popularity, nor honour. It is the villagers who like this ornamentation. It is a symbol of their devotion.
120. "Do not look at the flags. Just go and take *darshan* only. Do not stay there even for a moment. Then you can leave at once".
121. In the meanwhile, as they were close to Shirdi, he felt on hearing this simple advice that he should remove this inquietude of mind so that he did not feel restless later.
122. Be it so. When he saw Sree *Samartha*, *Buva* melted, his eyes were filling with loving tears and his throat was choked.
123. He experienced supreme bliss, his eyes were zestfully joyous and he felt anxious to roll in the dust of Baba's feet.
124. Seeing that handsome and comely appearance, his eyes and his mind were wonderstruck and he remained staring intently. He was captured by love.
125. The evil thoughts evaporated from his mind. The mind melted with joy of the *darshan*. His eyes were absorbed in the divine form. Buva was deeply engrossed.
126. Gazing at the great Saint, Somdev was supremely delighted. He felt at peace and desired to stay here forever.
127. Merely by the *darshan* all the doubts disappeared. His mind became quiescent. The sense of duality left him and he experienced complete unity consciousness.
128. He was tongue-tied and his eyes did not even blink. Supreme Consciousness enveloped him. He was satisfaction personified.
129. At first, he wanted to turn back on seeing the flags. Later his eyes were filled with tears of excessive love. The eight *satvik* emotions gushed forth. He was wrapped in Baba's love.
130. "Where the mind is fully absorbed that is our abode". He recalled these words of his own Guru. Buva was choked with love.
131. The Buva came forward slowly and as he did so, Maharaj got into a rage. He showered abuses but that only doubled Buva's love.
132. The great Baba's behaviour was strange. He took an extraordinary form and displayed the *Avatar* of *Narasimha*. It was a close resemblance.
133. "Leave my false claims (humbug) to me. Leave and go back to your home. Beware! If you ever come back again to my *Masjid* !
134. "Why do you need to take the darshan of one who flies flags over the *Masjid* ? Is this a sign of sainthood? Do not stay here even for a moment!"

135. Be it so. Later this *Swami*, who was a doubting Thomas, went into the courtyard. Looking at Sai's countenance from afar, he could not remain quiet.

136. 'These words are an echo of my own thoughts'. Hearing them, as they struck his ears word to word, *Buva* remained rooted in shame and realised that Maharaj was omniscient.

137. 'How foolish am I! And how wise is Maharaj ! How wrong were my thoughts about him! How pure is his heart!'

138. Sai embraced some, and touched some with his hand. He assured some and cast a merciful glance on some.

139. He looked at some smilingly. He consoled some who had sorrow, and gave *udi* and *prasad* to some. Thus, he satisfied everyone.

140. 'This being so, he was annoyed only with me! It seems that is due to my earlier behaviour. It is not anger but a lesson to me. It will be beneficial to me'.

141. Be it so. Later, that is what transpired. *Swami* got so absorbed in Baba that with Sai's grace, he was purified and was a staunch devotee of Baba's feet till the end.

142. May the strength of the potency of Sai devotion remove all evil addictions and jealousy; give birth to peace, wealth and patience; and make his devotees accomplish their goals.

143. This movable and immovable world is full of celestial musicians, the servants of Kuber, the deities and the demons. In the whole universe, Sai is the all-pervasive One, filling it uninterruptedly and truly.

144. If he had not assumed a form and had always remained without form, then we mankind would not have had his help and been obliged at all.

145. In conclusion, if Sai had not taken form, as part of his divine sport, and not collected the people, or had not opposed the wicked and villainous, then how would he have favoured the devotees?

146. Now that the chapter is coming to an end, I am reminded of an incident. It is an example of Sai's teachings, therefore I think it will be beneficial to whosoever follows it.

147. The incident is very short; and, who remembers it will achieve his welfare. Therefore, listeners, I request your attention for a moment.

148. Once, the devotee Mhalsapati, along with Nana Saheb, were seated in the *Masjid*. Listen to the wonder that took place.

149. A rich gentleman, from Vaijapur, who was keen on the *darshan* of *Samartha* Sai, came along with his family.

150. Seeing ladies in *purdah*, Nana felt a constraint and thought of getting up and leaving, to give them space, greater freedom and satisfaction.

151. Therefore, Nana moved aside to get up, when Baba restrained him. He said: "Those who wish to come will come up. You can remain seated peacefully".

152. "He has also come for *darshan*. But you came also. There is no problem", was suggested to them. They came up and bowed to Baba.

153. One of the ladies, raised the veil while bowing. Seeing her incredible beauty, Nana was smitten.

154. He was diffident to look at her openly, but he longed to do so. How should he behave? He was unable to control his infatuation.

155. He felt ashamed, in Baba's presence. Therefore, he did not raise his head, but the eyes strayed. Nana was in a dilemma.

156. This was Nana's inner state (of turmoil). Baba, who was all knowing, knew of it. How could others know of it? They were left to unravel the meaning of the words.

157. Knowing Nana's baffled state of mind, Baba decided to bring him back to his normal self. Listen to the advice he gave.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar

158. "Nana, why is your mind disturbed? Let the senses behave according to their inherent nature. Do not interfere. There is no harm in it.

159. "*Brahmadev* has created this beautiful world and it is our duty to appreciate its beauty, otherwise the creation will lose its value and charm. The mind will get steady and calm, slowly and gradually.

160. "When the front door is open, why go by the backdoor? Where there is a pure heart, there is no difficulty, whatsoever.

161. "If there is no evil thought in us, why should one be afraid of anyone? The eyes may do their work. Then, why should you be embarrassed?"

162. Madhavrao was there and he had a naturally curious mind. To satisfy his curiosity, he asked for the meaning of those words.

163. When Madhavrao asked thus, Nana said: "Wait a little, for the present. I will explain Baba's meaning, when we are on the way to the *wada*".

164. When the conversation about the general well-being was over, Nana bowed to Sai *Samartha* and started to return to his home. Madhavrao accompanied him.

165. He immediately asked Nana, "What did Baba's words: 'the mind will get steady and calm slowly and gradually' mean? Explain the exact meaning".

166. Nana did not feel inclined to tell the meaning. He tried to evade the matter. That created more suspicion in Madhav's mind and he was restless.

167. Then opening up his heart, Nana told him all that had transpired there, because of Madhavrao's insistence and thus unfolded the enigma.

168. How very alert Baba is! No matter whose mind strays where, he is himself witness to everything, and he knows everything.

169. The listeners must have been amazed on hearing this short but marvellous story. Seeing the deeper meaning one would gain priceless steadfastness and seriousness.

170. The mind is wavering by nature, but do not let it be unrestrained. Even if the senses are agitated do not let the body be impatient.

171. The senses cannot be trusted. Do not crave for the sense pleasures. Gradually, by steady practice, the frivolity will disappear.

172. Do not become a slave to the senses. They do not remain suppressed all the time. They should be systematically controlled, considering the circumstances.

173. Beauty is the object of the sense of sight. Beautiful objects should be seen fearlessly. Where is the need for shame or embarrassment? Only, do not entertain evil thoughts.

174. Making the mind desireless, observe God's creation. Then senses will be easily controlled and one would forget the enjoyment of the senses.

175. The charioteer is the main cause to take the chariot to the right destination. Similarly, the intellect must remain always aware of the attraction of the senses.

176. Just as the charioteer controls the chariot, the intellect by subjugating the senses controls the wayward body and the exceeding fickleness of the mind.

177. Once when a person becomes free from the enjoyment of the body, senses and the mind, he attains a place at the feet of Vishnu. Such is the power of the intellect.

178. The eyes and all the other senses should be thought of as horses, and beauty, enjoyment etcetra, whatever be the pleasures, should be considered as roads, leading to hell.

179. Even a trace of desire of sensory enjoyment destroys the spiritual bliss. Therefore, abandon it completely and only then you will attain liberation.

180. Even if outwardly the senses are controlled, but inwardly there is attachment, the cycle of birth and death does not come to an end. The sense objects are great and deadly destroyers.

181. With the help of a discriminating charioteer, who keeps the reins in hand with discernment, then the horses (of the senses) will not go astray, not even in dreams.

182. If one is fortunate to have such a charioteer, who is astute and who satisfies one's needs, who is determined, skilful, careful and clever, how can the abode of the Lord be far away!

183. That abode is of *Parabrahma*, and whose other name is *Vasudev* — they are the highest states of being – the Abode of the Absolute and the Supreme.

184. So be it. This chapter is now completed. The next one is even more interesting, and will entertain the inner spirit of the virtuous devotees. Listen to it methodically.

185. Be it so. In the end, Hemad offers himself at the feet of the *Sadguru*, who is the mover of the universe, and the inspirer of the intellect, with deep gratitude.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-ninth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Testing the Saint and the Control of the Mind".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Speech in the first of its four stages – the first stirrings of the breath.
2. The second stage of speech, from the first stirrings to articulate utterance.
3. The third stage of speech, from the first stirrings to articulate utterance in the trachea or larynx.
4. Actual words, or the fourth stage of speech.
5. It is said that the chameleon goes no further than the compound wall.

The king, the pauper, the poor, and the meek were all equal in his eyes. He was beyond honour or insults. He saw God in every living being. (Ch. 4, ovi 48)

He behaved ordinarily with all people, witnessed the dance and frolic of the *Muralis* [7], listened to the songs and *gazals*, swaying to them (with great relish), but his inner state of *samadhi* was absolutely undisturbed. (Ch. 4, ovi 49)

50
Removal of Ignorance

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. There is no limit to my obligation to my parents, who gave me birth as a human being and that I was not born as a worm.
2. I was not a torment to my mother in the womb. I was not born blind, lame, squint-eyed, stuttering, nor deaf and dumb. I was born hale and hearty, completely well-formed.
3. I was descended, with God's grace, in a high Brahmin caste family, whom even the gods respect, and was very fortunate.
4. As we are born millions of times, there is a mother and father for each birth. But there is a great rarity of such parentage which helps me in avoiding the cycle of birth and death.
5. The one who gives life is really the father; the other performs the thread ceremony; the third one is he who nurtures and fosters; the fourth one is he who protects from fear, troubles and tribulations.
6. In this world, they are all on an equal level. But there is no true father other than the merciful *Sadguru*. Listen to him in wonder for real achievement.
7. The one who impregnates the womb of the mother, by whom one is born, is the giver of life. He is the father in the popular sense of the term. But the *Sadguru* is the remarkable father.
8. He does not spend his seed and yet gives birth to his son, without the use of any bodily organs. He fully grants his grace.
9. I bow to him who frees one from the cycle of birth and death, the Cloud of Mercy, the Light of Knowledge, who gives the deep and the true knowledge of the *Vedas*, the best of all Gurus who pervades all.

10. I bow to the sun who is the remover of darkness of this world, one who has the knowledge of the Self and who is the most distinguished amongst the Saints, who is the moon for the minds of the devotees, who are like *Chakors*, like the wish-fulfilling tree, the best of all Gurus.
11. Unfathomable is the greatness of the *Gururaya* describing which words are inadequate and speech fails. It would be better to remain silent and keep one's head bowed at the Guru's feet.
12. Unless one has practised great austerities throughout the earlier lives, one does not have the *darshan* of a Saint, to remove the three-fold calamities.
13. One who desires to have spiritual gains, liberation and his own welfare, should surrender to a Saint. Then he will lack nothing.
14. Twice blessed is the company of the virtuous! How can its greatness be described! The virtuous devotees attain discrimination, detachment and supreme bliss near them.
15. Sai is Supreme Consciousness only. From the formless state, he took form. Who can definitely describe his desireless state!
16. He lovingly tells his own interesting story for the devoted and loving devotees, who are the listeners, being compassionate towards them. The stories are his temple.
17. The sense of ego is crushed by the touch of his hand on one's head, and gives way to the reverberations of the feeling of 'I am That', inundating the entire world with joy.
18. What power could an insignificant one like me have to describe his fame? He, himself, has brought to light this book, born out of the love of his devotees, by his grace.
19. I roll in the dust at Sai's feet, greet the assembly of listeners, bow to the sadhus, saints and virtuous people and lovingly embrace all.
20. Sai tells the stories as an easy sport, which are laden with the code of moral rectitude. Perpetual peace was his ornament. Even the great Saints meditated upon him.
21. It is not correct to compare him to the sun, because the sun sets; nor to the moon because it waxes and wanes. This Sai is always perfect.
22. Hemad humbles himself at his feet and lovingly appeals to the listeners to listen to this narration with faith, with complete attention and with interest.

23. The earth is well ploughed, and the seeds are sown. But if you, the Cloud of Mercy, do not rain can there be a harvest?

24. When the stories of the Saints are heard, there remains no sinfulness. Merits sprout on listening to the stories. Take advantage of this rare and favourable opportunity.

25. The four types of *Mukti*[1] hold no attraction for us. Enjoin unwavering devotion to Sai. This is our supreme achievement.

26. Since we are not at all bound, what association could we have with *mukti* ? Let devotion to the Saints awaken within us, which alone will purify our inner selves.

27. Where the sense of you and I does not arise, which should really be a natural state, we need that devotion without duality. We ask Sai for this boon.

28. Now this is the only request to the listeners. When they take the book in their hands to read, the subject matter, the reading thereof and the reader should all become one.

29. Ignore Hemadpant, as he is not the author of this *Satcharita*. He is only the instrument for the welfare of the devotees.

30. If by good fortune you have got an oyster and you throw it away, you have lost a pearl. Why concern yourself about how the *Ashwatha* (Peepal[2]) tree flourishes. Do not lose hope of your welfare.

31. Here, there is no one but Sai who speaks the words and writes them also. He, himself, is the subject to be listened to, the one who makes you listen, and also the listener. This union or oneness should not be lost.

32. Where the ears are not ready to listen with respect, and where the mind is not concentrated, then there is no listening or reading at all. Then how would anyone know the meaning?

33. While listening, do it with humility. The listeners should only deem that Sai is in their mind. Only then the correct listening is accomplished. Let the oneness be continuous.

34. Then, just as the waves of the waters mingle with all the waters, so all the inclinations or activities of the senses would be one with Sai.

35. Only in this way, the knowledgeable learn about spirituality, those who are interested in humour will be delighted with the wit, and those who appreciate poetry will be able to enjoy the poetic stanzas. Everyone will enjoy this book.

36. Be it so. Earlier in this *Satcharita*, in the thirty-ninth chapter, the

advice that *Samartha* gave to one of his foremost devotees, has been mentioned.

37. When the devotee was near Baba, he was reciting the fourth chapter of the 'Bhagvad Gita', from the beginning, at that time.

38. On the one hand he was pressing Baba's feet, and on the other he was reciting that prayer. When the thirty-third verse was over, he started on the thirty-fourth.

39. With a calm mind, and with full absorption, he was uttering the words very, very softly. But others did not know the source.

40. When he started on the thirty-fourth verse, Sainath felt like gracing his foremost devotee and putting him on the righteous path.

41. That devotee's name was Nana (Chandorkar). Then, Baba said to him: "Nana, what are you muttering? Why don't you speak aloud?

42. For some time, I have been watching that you are muttering something. But your voice is not distinct. What is this secret?"

43. Then Nana spoke clearly : "I am reciting the Gita. So that I may not disturb others, I am muttering the words".

44. "Let that be for others. But for me, speak clearly. Do you understand what you are reciting? Let me know clearly", said Sree.

45. Then, saying the verse in a loud voice beginning with *Tadviddhi Pranipatena*, Nana showed, what he was saying, with a prostration. Baba was satisfied on hearing it.

46. Then, when he was asked for the meaning of the verse, Nana said in detail the meaning as given by an earlier *acharya*. Baba shook his head.

47. Again he asked Nana: "Nana, consider the third metric foot, *Updekshyanti te gyanam* and try to concentrate on it.

48. In that, after the word *'te'* there is a sign of suspension for the letter '*a*'. If read as *agyan*, consider if the meaning becomes opposite.

49. Shankaranand, Dnyaneshwar, Anandgiri, Shreedhar, Madhusudan and other commentators make its meaning based on the word *gyan*.

50. And this is accepted by everyone, I also know that. But why should we knowingly be deprived of the marvel that can be enjoyed by inserting the suspension sign".

51. After speaking thus, Sai, the Cloud of Mercy, showered the drops of nectar of advice for the devotees, who were like the *Chakor* and *Chatak* birds. I have already narrated it earlier. (Chapt er 39).

52. But all the readers of this 'Sai Leela' (magazine in which the Satcharita

chapters were being published) were not amazed by this meaning. However, some had doubts. This is amazing.

53. So that they may be satisfied, and the matter may be properly proved, I will make a little more effort to convince them of the rightful use of this word *agyan*.

54. Some would even doubt whether Baba knew Sanskrit. There is nothing unknown to Saints. The reason for doubts seems to be something else.

55. Who does not know the saying from the *Shruti* that "One who has understood the One, has knowledge of everything". Sai had knowledge of the Self.

56. What do the Saints not know who can see the whole universe as clearly as an *amalak* fruit held in their palm? Even the sun is illuminated by them!

57. One, who has that Knowledge of The One, how can he have lack of any knowledge? Whatever is contained in any *vidya* is known to them. What is so important about Sanskrit?

58. There are some readers of the Sai *Leela*, who say "Nana is dishonest. This is arisen and contrived by his own imagination, and he has written about this unwanted suspension indicating his ignorance.

59. He has himself created this fictitious story about the suspension and the ignorance in relation to it. He has unnecessarily raised this fruitless wrangling to show off his great knowledge.

60. Where there was no suspension, he has introduced it. In the place of the word *gyan* he has derived the word *agyan*. In this way, he has put forth a contrary meaning of the *Gita*".

61. But looking at the facts and thinking deeply over it, there is no inconsistency in the thirty-ninth chapter of 'Sai Leela'.

62. Whatever be your opinion, and whether Nana is honest or dishonest, do not believe what he has narrated to be nonsensical utterance.

63. Leaving aside your aversion for Nana, the readers should not be swayed by emotions. When you set aside the apparent or superficial, he will be found to be innocent.

64. 'Sai Leela' is one of the best magazines. Without reading the thirty-ninth chapter, it would not be easily possible to understand the present chapter.

65. In the 'Bhagvad Gita', in the fourth chapter, called *Gyanyagnya* there is a discourse by Sree Krishna on ignorance and the thirty-fourth verse is about ignorance.

66. "*Tvadviddhi pranipatena, pariprashnena sevaya. Upadekshyanti te gyanam, gyaninastattva darshinah*".

67. This is one of the important verses of the *Gita*. In the third metric foot, there is a suspension before the word *gyan* thereby *agyan* appears.

68. If the suspension is not considered, the word gyan can be undoubtedly read. There is no objection against that. That is generally the meaning that is elucidated.

69. "Liberation is achieved through knowledge". These words from the *shrutis* are accepted by all. But it is not binding on the philosophers to teach *gyan* (knowledge).

70. I am the *Atman*, the pure witness, untainted, knowing, free and liberated, pervading the whole manifestation, supreme consciousness, unblemished, filled with the bliss of unity consciousness.

71. But I am neither ignorance nor am I the product of ignorance. Understand me to be "This Soul as *Brahman*" and know me to be the Treasure in the highest consciousness and also know me as Bliss.

72. "I am *Brahman*" (*Yajurveda*) is the saying that always inspires me. Know that this only is pure knowledge. "I am a sinner, unfortunate and godless": these feelings spring from the mine of ignorance.

73. This *Maya* is an ancient or eternal power. Because of ignorance one is in a state of being bound; because of knowledge one is free from all bondage. This is the state of a being from times immemorial.

74. This total misconception of name and form is the complete illusion caused by *Maya*. Words are inadequate to describe *Maya* and it is very difficult to conquer.

75. The abode of *Maya* is in the fanciful thoughts that arise. The state of being bound or free certainly arises from the imagination.

76. "Liberation is achieved through knowledge". This principle (verity) from the *Shrutis* is eternally true. But until the *karmas* arising from sins are annihilated, it is impossible for knowledge to dawn.

77. One who is impressed with pure knowledge, know that he has abandoned all desires. He is not bound by *Maya*. There is no place for passions or emotions in him.

78. A supremely knowledgeable person, like Shuka, came to a sad end also due to doubts. Ignorance is born due to doubts, which cannot be removed without the Guru.

79. When a doubt enters the mind of a knowledgeable person, even

such a person becomes egoistic. Even a huge pot of milk gets spoilt by a drop of sour gruel and all the milk is spoilt.

80. Therefore, it is important to understand ignorance, at the outset. Once that is removed, the mind gets purified. After that happens, knowledge manifests infinitely and the mind will attain undisturbed absorption in contemplation.

81. He, who is concentrated on riches and fame and is yet craving for sense enjoyment in spite of having had it and is incessantly thinking of wife and children, his knowledge is nothing but ignorance.

82. Thus, one who is obsessed with wealth, sons, and wife does not know his well-being even though he may be knowledgeable. Therefore, so long as he is without devotion, his knowledge is veiled by ignorance.

83. All living beings are full of ignorance. Becoming free from ignorance, become knowledgeable and then transcend that also. That stage is *Brahmaroop* or embodiment of *Brahman*, certainly.

84. When ignorance disappears, knowledge manifests. He who is knowledgeable, is forgiving by nature. Till the pride for the body is not lost, he is under the control of *Maya*.

85. *Avatars* like Ram and Krishna, Saints like Sanat, Sanak and others, the most knowledgeable ones, have *Maya* as their handmaiden; but she has fooled others.

86. Though the Self resides in the hearts of all creatures, no one knows this. Such is the inconceivable state of *Maya*, it has unfathomable power of illusion to veil it.

87. Unless the false pride of the feeling 'I am the doer, I alone am the enjoyer' is left off, and one does not surrender to the Dweller in the Heart, one cannot attain self-liberation.

88. Discriminate between the transitory and the eternal and listen (to sacred texts), chant, meditate and contemplate on them, and enrich yourself with the six virtues such as *shama*, *dama* etc. Only that will drive away ignorance.

89. 'The world is different from me'; 'I am small and limited'; the feeling that 'I am the body' – this is unalloyed ignorance.

90. In this science of *Vedant*, which propounds knowledge, there are four necessary antecedents – the writer, in all compassion, has explained them in detail.

91. The befitting person, the subject matter and the relation between the two are the three, and the fourth one, is the purpose. After

carefully explaining the 'Purpose', there arises what is called the removal of ignorance.

92. Complete unity of the individual soul and *Brahman* happens to be verily the main subject of *Vedant* and the removal of ignorance involved in understanding the principle of this unity, happens to be the 'Purpose'.

93. Therefore, removing this ignorance from the very roots is itself the attainment of Bliss of Self. Hence, using all contrivances, it is necessary to destroy ignorance.

94. Until one has removed the feeling of duality, he cannot be called knowledgeable. The knowledge of a person who has bodily pride can be called complete ignorance.

95. He makes a show of his own knowledge but performs improper acts. He is as good as dead. He is like the sleeping Kumbhakaran[3].

96. For him who does not behave in accordance with the *Vedas*, and does not follow the rules of the four castes, the only means to purify his intellect is the removal of ignorance.

97. Even Brahma and others have been deluded by the three *gunas*, such as *satva* etc., also by words (speech), touch, form, taste and smell, and on account of the sex organs, and the tongue, with different permutations and combinations.

98. All the movable beings in the world are encircled by Ignorance and *Maya* from times immemorial. They are engulfed by passions such as anger and hatred, and surrounded by ignorance.

99. Every being is bound by ignorance. For its pure form to manifest, it is necessary to break the ties with ignorance, desires and the fruits of past actions.

100. The cow's teats are so full of milk that it oozes out. The tick or cattle louse sticks fast there itself. But it enjoys the blood, so how would it have taste for milk?

101. Notice the frog and the humble bee. The beautiful lotus houses them both. But the fragrant pollen is around which the bee hovers, while the frog feeds on the mire.

102. Though a repository of knowledge is before a person, a foolish one is attracted by ignorance, and ignorance itself appeals as knowledge. What use to him is instruction in knowledge?

103. When ignorance is removed totally, the knowledge of *Brahman* will manifest itself. Therefore it is necessary to explain what is ignorance, at the outset. Know that.

104. There is nothing purer than the knowledge of *Brahman* in all the three worlds. The teachings of that knowledge has a lot of reverence. Without it, life is in vain.

105. If this *Brahman* were an effect on par with objects cognised by intelligence etc. then there would have been at least some sense of enjoyment which would have been helpful in perceiving it, enabling one to say: "This is That".

106. The principle of *Brahman* has intelligence in its purpose. But that which goes beyond the sense of enjoyment is perceivable by intellect and is the one that the *Smritis* declare but the *Shrutis* do not agree with it.

107. When intelligence etc. does not exist, then verily the instrument of cognition become extinct. Then, how can the existential character of *Brahman* remain as the basis for resort.

108. Whatever is experienced by the senses, all that exists and nothing else. This is well known to all. *Brahman* then does not at all exist.

109. This will be the meaning of all that is said so far. But if it is true it will be calamitous, making intelligence alone existent, through and through, helping one to understand the chain of objects that are subtle, subtler and the like.

110. Let it (intelligence) also dissolve; but there too it stays in the form of the combination of existence because undoubtedly the soul is the root cause of the world, and all dissolution is ultimately rooted in existence.

111. If a stone is thrown on a pot, its form is broken leaving behind the pieces. Though the shape of the pot is destroyed, the pieces indicate that it existed.

112. Although the effect in the form of the pot is destroyed, the existence of the pot knows no destruction, as the pot shards remain for continuity. So, indeed, is the essence of existence in them.

113. At no time the dissolution of the effect is one which ends in its void. The dissolution is rooted through existential character. This is valid as is seen in the cognition of *sat* having the idea of *sat* which is existence.

114. All the holy places and vows are holy or pure; but holier and purer is Knowledge of the Lord. Then without the Knowledge of the Lord, singing *bhajans* and worship is meaningless.

115. The mind is tainted by ignorance. That mind cannot be cleansed

without devotion to God; and without devotion, knowledge is not born.

116. Therefore, know what is ignorance at the outset. After it is described and you derive the lesson therefrom, only then will the bondage be broken. Devotion is the only means to do that.

117. If collyrium is applied to the eyes of a child, born with feet foremost, it can find wealth which is underground. Similarly, when devotion is practised, ignorance is destroyed and knowledge dawns.

118. Knowledge itself means attainment of Self-realisation, for which the main thing is to destroy ignorance. Unless devotion to God is achieved, the power of *Maya* is boundless.

119. Knowledge and ignorance are mixed together. Throw away ignorance and pick up only pure knowledge, like discarding the stones or impurities from the grains of rice, before the rice is cooked in warm water.

120. The Lord exists in all living beings. Doing a *yagnya* for knowledge and other worship, if one sees Krishna (i.e. the Lord) as all-pervasive, ignorance burns away leaving behind knowledge.

121. Now let us see the nature of the *yagnya* for knowledge. The pillar to which the sacrifice is tied is the 'I am *Brahman*' axiom, the five elements of the universe are the courtyard for the *yagnya* and the animal that is sacrificed is the belief that there is a difference between a living being and God.

122. The five senses and the five *prans* are the only requirements for this *yagnya*. In the hollow space of the mind and the intellect, kindle the fire of knowledge.

123. The being is the one who performs the *yagnya*, offering oblations of ignorance, in place of the clarified butter. He is completely engrossed in the Bliss of the Self, and that being is bathed in the water of purification, at the end of the sacrifice.

124. In conclusion, without the oblations of ignorance, in place of the clarified butter, the fire of knowledge can never be kindled. By burning the difference between a living being and God, manifest the knowledge of unity consciousness.

125. Just as a clean mirror is covered by dust and the light of the fire by smoke, similarly knowledge that is controlled by anger and desires, is covered by ignorance.

126. Just as Rahu hides the moon or moss covers the water, *Maya* puts a veil over the self-luminous knowledge.

127. The intellect of the great knowledgeable ones is corrupted and they fall into disgrace. They know how to remedy the situation but do not follow it. They act as they wish.

128. Though able to see, they act like the blind. Leaving aside their good attachments, they behave in a shameless manner. They become a source of worry on account of evil association, almost by force and continue to act at their free will.

129. Those who have retired from worldly life return as householders; and with determination indulge in forbidden acts. They accept loathsome objects as most pleasant.

130. Those mistakes and sins which they have avoided by effort, they fall into due to ignorance or fate. What could be said about such a state! Is this the wisdom of a knowledgeable person?

131. Even if there is a very knowledgeable person and does not wish even for the shadow of a sin, he gets deceived like a moth by the light and does not distinguish between the good and the bad deeds.

132. He knows fully well that doing a sin is ignorance but because of the inclination for desire, he does not pay heed.

133. All these deeds are performed due to desires. Desires are the cause of all destruction, which matures in the form of anger.

134. When there is obstruction to the fulfilment of desire, then thwarted desire becomes anger. At every step it hinders liberation. This course of action is an impediment to knowledge.

135. This living being is caught up in the difficulties caused by anger and desires. The embodiment of *Brahman* is very close and dwells near knowledge, on the same level.

136. They (that is, anger and desires) drown one without there being any water; burn one without there being any fire; kill one without there being any weapons; and bind one without there being any rope.

137. Even the knowledgeable cannot withstand them and are defeated if they wager against them. They have the power to bring about the destruction of the universe and swallow the living beings without their knowledge.

138. Desire and anger envelop the foetus of knowledge like a membrane, just as the killer snake encircles the roots of the sandal wood tree.

139. The senses, intellect and mind are the abodes for those desires. With the help of these, the knowledge of the living being is dimmed and he is lured.

140. If you want to obtain sandal wood, then you will have to kill the

snake. Remove the veil of desire and anger and attain the store of knowledge.

141. Without killing the snake, can anyone attain the sandal wood? Without killing the black snake, can you obtain the buried treasure?

142. Similarly, to achieve *Parabrahma* and Self-Realisation the only means is to remove the curtain of *Maya*.

143. Therefore, at first, control the senses, thereby anger and desires will be destroyed. A living being is controlled by anger and desire and knowledge is veiled by ignorance.

144. The senses are subtler than the body; the mind is more subtle than them; the intellect is subtlest compared even to the mind; the Supreme Being is subtler than even the intellect.

145. This most high, supreme truth transcends all worldly existence and righteousness. That Supreme Spirit is the most beneficial. That is the nectar-sweet Eternal Self.

146. The pure witness, untainted, eternal, free and liberated— that indeed is the principle of the Non-Duality State; that alone is the nature of Supreme Bliss in apposition to sentience.

147. That which is known as *Panchikaram* [4] is verily the display of the form of *Maya*, the only instrument of superimposition and sentient. It is necessary to be conscious of this.

148. These five elements without their judicious combinations are called the subtle elements. Their evolutes viz. the vital airs, the senses, the mind and intelligence form the 'subtle' body of the soul.

149. Do appreciate that the five elements combined in the five ways give rise to the 'gross' part of the *Atman* and this 'gross' body of the soul. The knowledgeable ones call it *VIRAT*, which is the gross or the material body.

150. The cause of the origin of gross and subtle bodies is the ignorance of the real nature of the Self. Know that with its appearance, which is *Avyakrit* [5], the body is the cause of the *Atman*.

151. This is known as the causal body which is associated with the reflection of sentiency. It becomes the cause of ignorance which is known as the unmanifest and not evolved.

152. The reason for all this is neither impartite or partite nor both. For the body to be destroyed the only knowledge to be attained is the union of *Brahman* with the *Atman*.

153. To be in the state of one's own form that is known as *moksha* or

liberation. There is no *moksha* other than to be in one's own proper form.

154. If only knowledge about the union of *Brahman* with the *Atman* is achieved, then ignorance is removed. Therefore, it is necessary to describe what ignorance is.

155. That which has become soiled because of ignorance, has reached a state of being tainted. That state came to be called as existent. It thus assumed the state of being denoted or connoted by the word.

156. Though originally it was beyond the ken of the senses, it was made understandable by word. It was only then that the form entered the mind and assumed the form of *Aumkar*.

157. Blessed indeed is him whose body falls while meditating upon this *Aumkar – Brahman* along with the remembrance of the Lord.

158. So be it. From the spoken word, *Aum*, that is the form of *Brahman* which is unseen, there appears the Unmanifest. From this Unmanifest arises the principle of this *mahttatva* [6] which is an evolute from the Unmanifest and it is from that that the ego is born.

159. Ego originates in the subtle rudiments, further giving rise to the gross elements and verily this world is born from these five elements.

160. Cosmic ignorance is verily the indication of the form of this world; and for the demolition of this nescience, it is necessary to explain ignorance.

161. That which is pure consciousness is the pristine form totally pure and unsullied. Whatever is different from this is soiled. It is not proper to mix the two.

162. Know that the *Brahman* is very different from that which is expressed inwards. Therefore, with the help of the power of proper instruction it is necessary to set aside the layers of ignorance.

163. The mind experiencing a dream in sleep sees or visualises the three worlds by itself without eyes. Ignorance is the cause for all this.

164. While perceiving one entity, it appears to be different like a rope that appears in the form of a snake and silver in the interior of mother-of-pearl.

165. Perceive only the rays of the sun. People call it a mirage. But this is only a sport of *Maya*, before which even the knowledgeable ones become helpless.

166. When one brandishes the burning wood, round and round, what is seen is the firebrand. Even here, it is the wonder of illusion.

167. While seeing the real fire there is no room for the fire-brand. Similarly, the expanse of the allurement caused by illusion creates the world which does not really exist.

168. When the illusion is removed with the help of such a resolve, then only this mundane existence ceases to exit. 'I am the body. She is my wife and this is my home'—all this is a futile exercise.

169. Even those who are called knowledgeable and learned, but are deeply involved in the attachments to son, cattle etc., i.e. to earthly possessions, do not enjoy the slightest of happiness.

170. The experts in the branches of knowledge endowed with intelligence do not consider any other person as their equal. This is a great conceit within the heart that causes discontent.

171. This itself, illusion or ignorance or state of nescience and the primordial matter, is the chief. At the outset, the knower has to start by removing these and then only knowledge would arise.

172. This knowledge, however, is self luminous. It is not necessary to give instructions about this. When ignorance is destroyed, the exultation of knowledge will manifest.

173. It is like a gem, full of lustre, which is pressed down with dirt and dust for years together and the memory of which is extinguished.

174. Then, at some point of time, by chance, accompanied by action and aided by *Dharma* it comes to hand, it appears that all its pristine lustre is lost because of its having been with stones and clods of earth.

175. Then on cleaning it well and removing the dirt and dust, it acquires its pristine lustre. Similarly is the state of knowledge-realisation.

176. Dirt and dust are ignorance. This ignorance veils the knowledge. After removing the dust and the dirt, the jewel will shine easily.

177. Discrimination between the transient and permanent objects destroys sin. That itself grants refinement and rectification and that itself creates knowledge.

178. This world is a market place of *Maya* (illusion) flooded with real and fake objects. There are many customers ready to take the fake objects believing them to be real.

179. But many wise ones' wisdom is dissipated in ascertaining the fake from the real. One must know the indications which cause this deception.

180. Therefore, it is necessary to have an assayer to distinguish between

the real and the fake. He (the *Sadguru*) will easily show the difference and ignorance will finally disappear.

181. Once ignorance is removed, then knowledge remains, and illusion will be easily removed. Whatever remains is the Self. Know that. There is no need for visible proof.

182. Though the view of wisdom is clear, it is dimmed by the darkness of the imagination. This darkness flees with *upadesh* (spiritual instruction). What remains then is full knowledge.

183. In reality if there is a garland lying on the way, which when seen at eventide, seems like a snake, the only reason for this is ignorance.

184. When you light the lamp, hidden in the pocket, ignorance vanishes. The real form is clearly seen. The semblance to the snake automatically disappears.

185. Therefore, the remedy to do away with the harm or evil of ignorance is *upadesh*. Therefore, the wise ones weary themselves by giving the *upadesh* of what constitutes ignorance.

186. Being, presently, in the mundane world is due to *prarabdh* (actions in the past life), which were done in the past, born out of ignorance. At the outset, this knowledge is necessary.

187. 'Knowledge is Truth and Brahman is Eternal'! Ignorance, illusion, etc. are all the cause of erroneous conception. When this erroneous conception is removed, then only will the misconception about knowledge be dispelled.

188. He, who has not lost the pride of the self, who will call him wise? He, who is the abode of wrongful pride, can be called ignorance personified.

189. That which is called a flood of illusions, in which the world is fully engrossed, is but mundane existence for which ignorance is the basic prop.

190. It arises out of ignorance; and its grandeur is born of ignorance. When there is plurality instead of unity, that too has its refuge in ignorance.

191. When there is a little light and a little darkness (twilight or dim light), the rope on the road, though a rope appears to be a serpent, and one is terrified.

192. The misconception that it is a snake is merely ignorance. That ignorance has veiled the truth. Until this ignorance is dispelled, the mind does not become free of fear.

193. To some it appears like a garland of flowers, while some see it as a

stick. In short, it is all a misconception and a decline in excessive misjudging.

194. One, who follows the writings of the *Vedas* and has a belief in God, he alone is qualified to have the Knowledge of *Brahman*. One who is an atheist for numerous lives can never be so qualified.

195. Those, who see the world as a dwelling place for movable and immovable persons and things and not as a manifestation of God in various forms, are confused. They never escape from the cycle of births and deaths and for them the essence of *Brahman* is unattainable or extremely difficult to attain, whereas it is very easily attained by those who are qualified.

196. No amount of sermonising is effective here, nor acceptance of the different *Vedas* ; nor the intellect to understand the meaning of various scriptural books; nor being well-versed (by reading or listening) to such books.

197. By the use of words, one can gain bookish knowledge. But can it give the knowledge of *Brahman* or Truth? The intellect is capable of discrimination but *Brahman* or Truth is not at its command.

198. The *Shrutis* have a vehement desire to describe it but have not attained *Brahman* or Truth. They have reverted to describing the glory of *Brahman* or Truth and given up their desire for the pursuit of that Knowledge.

199. The six orthodox schools of philosophy have spent themselves and indulged in arguments till this day but the Self remained undescribed and did not come within the purview of words.

200. The great, learned ones became like fire-flies before the sun, in respect of the Self. Once the Self is realised, the meaningless maze of words disappears.

201. Observe that, in the world, in the darkness of the night all activities are carried out with the light of lamps. But when the sun arises at dawn, the people disregard the lamps.

202. Therefore, that (i.e. Knowledge of the Self) which is not a subject to be described in words, how can it then be taught? Therefore, the narrator must have the aim of destroying ignorance only with words.

203. When worship is done with the belief and wisdom of the existence of the Self, then only is the *Atman* propitiated and reveals the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, becoming extant to the worshipper.

204. In the place of *Atman*, if one meditates on *Parmatman* and there is no distinction made between the two, and worship is done in this manner, the *Atman* is propitiated with the worshipper.

205. There is no other better means than to propitiate the *Atman*. Seeing that the seeker is inclined towards the *Atman*, the *Atman* itself grants grace.

206. When the object of the book is accomplished, the narrator always implores the listeners to beg forgiveness for putting them through the ordeal of listening. This is the customary way.

207. But, this is not the case in respect of this *Satcharita*, because I do not have the capability for writing it. Sai himself has written his story, by giving the pen in my hand.

208. Therefore, I am not the author of the book and no one is put through any ordeal by me. If I ask for forgiveness of the listeners, I will be unnecessarily taking the responsibility of the deed.

209. I have no claims to its virtues nor are the imperfections mine. When Sai himself is the doer, that brings the matter to an end.

210. After taking Sai's permission, I have written exactly as he has narrated and I have considered ignorance distinctly, for the listeners.

211. By pervading my very being, *Gurudev* has thrown the light on the subject to make known his own splendour, his power and his grandeur.

212. Any one who finds virtues in this book, or imperfections, is deserving of my total veneration, as being the embodiment of God (*Narayan*) Himself.

213. Sree Sai has written this story, for the supreme benefit of his devotees, having created his own biography, holding Hemad's hand.

214. Sree Sai took the bodily form only to favour the people, to destroy evil thoughts and obstinacy, and to protect the people's togetherness.

215. Therefore, Hemad prostrates himself at his feet, with whole-hearted faith. The assembly of listeners must be completely attentive to hear the interesting stories to follow.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the fiftieth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Removal of Ignorance".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. *Salokata* residence in the same heaven with any deity. *Samipata*, nearness of proximity to the deity. *Saroopata*, assimilation with the deity. *Sayujata*, absorption with the deity.

2. It is stated in the *Venkatesh Stotra* that the *peepal* tree flourishes with the excreta of the crow, used as manure.
3. Ravan's brother, a giant who indulged in gorging and sleeping.
4. Combining amicably together of the five elementary substances.
5. Not developed. In the *Vedas*, an elementary substance from which all things were created.
6. The second of the twenty-five principles of *samkhyas*, one of the six *Shastras*.

Baba explaining to Nana the meaning of 'Tadviddhi Pranipatena - Gita ovi 34'

Nanasaheb Chandorkar

51

A Triad of Stories of Three Devotees

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Hail! Hail! Sai! Supporter of the devotees! The Greatest of the Gurus who has shed light on the meaning of the *Gita*! Bestower of all *Siddhis* ! May your Grace be upon me!
2. Sandalwood grows on the Malaya range of mountains[1] to counteract the heat of the summer or the clouds rain for the happiness of the people on earth.
3. Or flowers bloom in spring for the worship of the deities; or for the satisfaction of the listeners there arises a tradition of narration of stories or parables.
4. On hearing the *Saicharita*, the listeners and the narrator are both purified; the ears of the listeners are purified and so also the mouth of the narrator.
5. In the last chapter, how knowledge manifests on destruction of ignorance was narrated, with the meaning of the verse, commencing with the words *Tadviddhi pranipatena*.
6. At the end of the Bhagvad Gita, at the conclusion of the eighteenth chapter, in the seventy-second verse, Sree Krishna asks Arjuna:
7. "By the discourse that has been given uptil now have your desires been removed?" This was the clear question – not whether he gained knowledge.
8. Similarly, Partha (Arjuna) reciprocated: "My desires have been scattered". He said: "I have not gained knowledge but my desires are destroyed".
9. The other name for desires is ignorance. They merely appear as two

different words. There is no difference in their meaning. Those who are learned in the Gita know this.

10. "By the advice that you have given to me, my desires, that is, my ignorance has been destroyed," Arjun told Sree Krishna, in the beginning of the eleventh chapter.

11. In the present new chapter, I shall narrate the unique story about Kaka Saheb (Hari Sitaram Dixit) and how he was established in Shirdi.

12. Hear from the very beginning about his ties with Shirdi on account of his past birth, and his close association with Sai – and the principal reason which determined all this.

13. There are many stories about him, which are known to the young and the old. But all do not know how he happened to come to Shirdi, in the first instance.

14. This is a story of merits of earlier lives, which granted him God's Grace, and which later resulted in meeting the *Sadguru*, who blesses the disciples with Self Bliss.

15. In this chapter, I will narrate to the listeners a triad of stories of three devotees, who became famous. They will bring peace to the hearts of the listeners.

16. We may try hundreds of means or *sadhanas* to attain the spiritual goal but without the grace of the *Sadguru*, it is not possible to achieve the goal of life.

17. Listening to the sweet story on the subject will fulfil the longings of the listeners. Love for such stories will manifest and the desire for one's own welfare will increase.

18. This most purifying chapter will satisfy the devotees of a Guru. Listeners should hear it attentively, for their own well-being.

19. Hari Sitaram Dixit, was well-known as Kaka Saheb, with respect, to all the devotees of Sai Baba, and is remembered with love.

20. His earlier background is well-known, pleasing and interesting. Therefore, I respectfully narrate it to the ardent devotees. It will give happiness to those who are eager to hear his life-story.

21. He, who did not even know the name of 'Sai' till 1909, became a great devotee of Sai and was known as such to all.

22. Many years after his university education, Nanasaheb Chandorkar came once to Lonavala[2].

23. Dixit was his old friend, whom he met there after several years. They talked about their welfare, with each other.

24. Dixit told him about his accident in London, when his foot slipped while boarding a train and was injured. The trouble that he suffered from could not be relieved inspite of hundreds of remedies.

25. The detailed story about this injury came out in the natural course of conversation. It reminded Nana of the usefulness of Sree Sai Baba in such cases.

26. "Do you feel that you would like to get rid of your lameness for ever? If so, come for my Guru's *darshan*," said Nana to him.

27. Then, Nana believing it to be unique, narrated in detail about Sai's nature, glory and greatness, Sai being the jewel among saints.

28. "I draw to me my man from afar, even across the seven seas, like a sparrow with a string fastened to its feet".

29. This is Baba's usual assurance. Moreover Nana had given a long discourse. He said: "If you are not his man, you will not be attracted to him.

30. "If you are not his man, you will not even have his *darshan*. This is one of Baba's significant aspects. Will you go there on your own?"

31. Be it so. Hearing all the description about Sai, Dixit felt a great satisfaction. Then he said to Nana: "I will take Baba's *darshan*.

32. "Why talk about the pain in my leg! The whole body is perishable. Let the injury to my leg remain as long as it does. I am not worried about it.

33. "I will go for your Guru's *darshan*, but for the bliss of attaining liberation. I have no wish for small pleasures and I will not plead for them.

34. "There is no happiness other than union with *Brahman*. That is the only priceless happiness. I will become a servitor of your Guru only for this invaluable bliss.

35. "Let the lameness of my leg be. It does not distress me. But I would pray that my lame, fickle mind is brought around.

36. "I have got very tired of making efforts but the mind does not become steady. When I make efforts to control it, it runs amok without my knowledge.

37. "However attentive I may be in trying to control it, I do not know when it will escape. I am greatly amazed.

38. "Therefore, Nana, with my whole heart I will take your Guru's *darshan*. I will pray to him to remove this impairment of my mind".

39. Sai was supremely eager for the spiritual attainment of such a devotee who was not interested in the pleasures of the perishable body but who longed for the ultimate bliss.

40. The election of the then Legislative Council was the topic of conversation everywhere. The people were engaged in this work, in many places.

41. Kakasaheb came suddenly to Nagar (Ahmednagar) to canvass for votes for himself, and was meeting friends for that purpose.

42. There was a chieftain there by the name of Kakasaheb Mirikar. Dixit had close family relations with him. He, therefore, stayed there with him.

43. According to the custom of those times, an exhibition of horses was arranged at Nagar. Therefore, people from all walks of life were engaged in work connected with it.

44. Balasaheb Mirikar, the *Mamlatdar* of Kopergaon, was present at Ahmednagar town for the exhibition.

45. After Dixit's work was completed, he came there. 'How would it be possible to go to Shirdi? Who will take me there?'

46. Once the work had come to an end, his attention was on the way to Shirdi. Dixit's intense desire was only for the opportunity to have Baba's darshan.

47. 'Who will come with me? Who will take me before Baba and place me at his feet?' These were Dixit's dilemmas.

48. Once the work for the elections was over, Dixit was only worried about how he would go to Shirdi. He respectfully requested Mirikar.

49. Balasaheb Mirikar was the son of Kakasaheb Mirikar. They discussed among themselves as to who should go with Dixit.

50. If any one of them would accompany him, then there would be no need for another. Then who should definitely go with him, was being debated.

51. Man thinks of ordinary solutions; but God plans something else. For Dixit's journey to Shirdi, something unexpected happened.

52. On this side, there was this turmoil. On the other side, observe the agitation. Knowing the strong desire of the devotee, see how *Samartha* yearned with compassion!

53. While Dixit was driven by these thoughts and was seated, worrying about this, Madhavrao himself came to Nagar. Everyone was surprised.

54. The father-in-law of Madhavrao had telegraphed him from Nagar that his mother-in-law was gravely ill and he should come immediately with his wife.

55. As soon as he received the telegram, he prepared to leave after obtaining Baba's permission. Both of them went to Chithali station.

56. They caught the 3 o'clock train and both went to Nagar. They took a *tonga* and got down at the door.

57. At the same time, Nanasaheb Panshe and Appasaheb Gadre were also there, in connection with the exhibition and were passing by that road.

58. As Madhavrao was alighting from the *tonga*, they saw him unexpectedly. They were quite surprised. They could not contain their joy.

59. "Look at this! By good fortune Madhavrao, who is the *sevakari* of Vithoba temple, is here, from Shirdi! Who can be better than him to take Dixit to Shirdi?"

60. Then calling out to him, said: "Dixit Kaka has come to Mirikar's. Go and see him. Marvel at Baba's leelas!

61. "Dixit is our remarkable friend. You will get acquainted with him. He is very eager to go to Shirdi and your arrival will delight him."

62. Giving this message to Madhavrao, they gave the information to Dixit; whose anxiety was relieved on hearing it. He was extremely pleased.

63. When Madhavrao visited his in-laws, he found that his mother-in-law was better. So he rested a little. Then Mirikar sent for him.

Madhavrao Deshpande alias Shama

64. Respecting the invitation, a little after sunset Madhavrao left to meet Dixit.

65. When Balasaheb introduced him, it was his first meeting. Both of them decided to take the 10 O'clock train, the same night.

66. After this plan was decided, see what an unusual thing happened next. Balasaheb removed the curtain over Baba's portrait.

67. This was a photograph of Baba which was worshipped by Megha, a true and great devotee of Baba, with the conviction that Baba was the holy, three-eyed Shankar, Incarnate.

68. Because the glass was broken, it was sent to Nagar with Balasaheb for repairs. That was how it initially left Shirdi.

69. This picture, having been repaired, was in Mirikar's drawing room, covered with cloth, as if it was waiting for Dixit.

70. Balasaheb was to return it after the conclusion of the horse-show. But there was yet some more time for that. Therefore, he entrusted it to Madhavrao.

71. Removing the cloth, he uncovered it. He gave it in Madhavrao's keeping; and said: "Go upto Shirdi happily, in Baba's company."

72. When he first cast a glance at that portrait, which was pleasing in all aspects, Kakasaheb was filled with joy. After prostrating before it with reverence, he began to look at it.

73. Experiencing this unusual incident, and seeing Sai *Samartha's* photograph unexpectedly, which was so pleasing and pure, Dixit's eyes were riveted to it.

74. He was greatly delighted that he, for whose *darshan* he was longing, his portrait embodying his form, could be seen by him, on the way itself.

75. It was a strange coincidence that it was at Kakasaheb Mirikar's house, at the same time when Dixit was there, having come earlier from Shirdi.

76. It seemed that Sai *Samartha* had come at Mirikar's residence, under a pretext, to fulfil Dixit's heartfelt longing.

77. At Lonavala itself, the attraction for the Guru had taken place when he had met Nana and talked at length with him. It was the seed sown for the meeting.

78. Otherwise why should this portrait from Shirdi have come here at this time and remained covered for so long at this place?

79. So be it. After it was so decided, Madhavrao and Dixit, taking the picture with them, set out happily.

80. They both left for the station after dinner, that same night. They paid the second-class fare and bought the tickets.

81. Right at the stroke of ten, the sound of the train could be heard. They also saw that the second-class compartments were crammed with passengers.

82. The situation was such that both of them were greatly worried. The time was also short. What arrangement could be made and how?

83. Be it so. Now, because, of the overcrowding, both of them decided to return to their place and go the next day to Shirdi.

84. At that moment, Dixit saw the guard of the train with whom he had an acquaintance. He easily made arrangements for them to travel by the first class.

85. Then, sitting in the train, they started talking about Baba, to their heart's content. Madhavrao narrated the nectar-like stories. Dixit overflowed with joy.

86. Thus that journey was completed very joyfully. Time passed very quickly. The train reached Kopergaon. They alighted in a very happy mood.

87. At the same time, they unexpectedly saw Nanasaheb Chandorkar at the station. Dixit was full of happiness that they had met each other.

88. Nana too had come for Baba's *darshan* and was proceeding to Shirdi. All the three of them were amazed at this coincidence.

89. Then, the three of them hired a *tonga* and left on the way, animatedly talking. They had a bath in the Godavari, on the way, and reached holy Shirdi.

90. Later, after having Sai's *darshan* Dixit's heart melted and his eyes filled with tears. The water of Self Bliss spilt and over flowed.

91. "I too was waiting for you. Then I sent Shama to meet you, all the way to Nagar," spoke Sai clearly to him.

92. Hearing these words, every pore in Dixit's body was filled with joy; his throat was choked with emotion; his mind was full of happiness; and he was sweating profusely.

93. His body trembled; his mind was engrossed in Self Bliss; his eyes were half closed and he was immersed in a cloud of joy.

94. "To-day my eyes have served their purpose". Saying this he embraced Baba's feet. He felt truly blessed and the world could not contain his joy.

95. Later, years passed. His faith was firmly rooted at Sai's feet. He attained Sai's grace fully; and wearied his body in Sai's service.

96. To serve Sai well, he built a house or *ashram* in Shirdi and stayed there for many years. He spread Sai's fame.

97. In conclusion, whosoever longs for Sai is fulfilled by him. Sai is the abode of refuge for his devotees and the giver of ultimate joy to them.

98. There are myriad *chakors* for the moon, but for the *chakors* there is just one moon. Similarly, a mother may have many sons but for the son there is only one mother.

99. For the sun there are innumerable white lotuses, but for the lotuses there is only one sun giving them the light of the day. There is no dearth of devotees for you; but *Guruvar*, you alone are their father.

100. For the cloud there are numerous *chataks* but for the *chataks* there is only one cloud. Similarly, he has countless devotees but for them he alone is the mother and the father.

101. He respects the honour of those who surrender to him easily with devotion. He fulfils their desires with his efforts and might. This can be observed even presently.

102. All living beings in this world will meet their end at the hands of death. Sai made Dixit fearless of death by saying: "I will take you in a plane".

103. Dixit's end came about as assured by Sai's words. He died with the words of Sai's glory on his lips. It happened before my very eyes.

104. We were both sitting on a bench in a train next to one another, engrossed in the stories of Sai *Samartha*, when he seemed to take off suddenly in the plane.

105. He seemed to have unexpectedly seized the opportunity by placing his head on my shoulder. Dixit had suddenly attained a place in the plane and achieved heavenly bliss.

106. There was no contraction nor convulsion. There was no rattle in the throat nor was there any sharp pain. While his body was normal in all aspects, with all the faculties functional, his body became still.

107. The mortal life was cast away. His light merged with the Self. He established in his Real Form by flying away. His light became one with *Brahman*.

108. When he concentrated at Sai's feet, he had completely lost his ego. His behaviour was such that he was well content and had totally dedicated himself to the Lord.

109. In *Shake* 1848 (AD 1926), in the Hindu calendar month of *Jeshth*, on the *Ekadashi* day of the dark fortnight of the month,[3] (i.e. the

11th day of the waning moon), Dixit attained union with the Lord, leaving behind the world of conditioned existence.

110. Call it death or say that his plane had arrived. He merged at Sai's feet. Everyone is aware of the truth of this story.

111. 'One needs to be free from such an obligation'! Anyone who believes this must be deemed to be totally devoid of devotion. There is nothing in this world that one can give as a gift in lieu of this obligation; it would not even happen in a dream!

112. If one thinks of giving the *Chintamani* [4] one will only increase one's daily anxieties. If one thinks that the obligation is repaid by giving such an object, it is only a childish thought.

113. Well, if one offers the *Kalpataru* [5] to the Guru and tries to please him, the Guru, however, is skilful in granting something which is unchanging; can that free one from all debts and obligations to the Guru?

114. Be it so. Instead of all this if one gives *parees* [6] to the Guru, then the *parees* will turn into gold. But the Guru will make one savour the divine knowledge.

115. If one gives the *Kamadhenu* [7] to the Guru, believing that in this way his obligation is repaid, one will only greatly increase one's own desires. The Guru is without any expectations and is a willing giver.

116. If one gives the wealth of the whole world to the Guru, in order to repay his obligation, can one repay it by illusory or *Mayik* objects when he has given the Real or *Amayik*?

117. If one offers one's body to the Guru, it is only a perishable object; if one offers one's life to him then know that too is illusory.

118. The *Sadguru* is the bestower of the Real things. By offering him illusory objects how can he be repaid? This is an impossible concept.

119. Therefore, with complete and singular faith, prostrate the whole body in salutation, place your head at the feet of the *Sadguru*, remembering the benefits and obligations he has conferred.

120. Constant and eternal remembrance of the benefits conferred by the Guru is the ornament of the disciple. He who tries to repay that obligation, that disciple loses his happiness.

121. Listening so far to this story, the listeners have a strong desire for more. Observing their eagerness, together with curiosity, I will narrate a small story.

122. The saints also express their brotherly love for other saints, in

accordance with the norms of worldly people; or that they are very intent on bringing people together to adopt a particular way and want this creed to be known.

123. Or, Sai himself plays the part of those characters to achieve the welfare of his devotees and to teach them spirituality.

124. Listeners please hear with respect a short story illustrating this. They will then understand how saints understand other saints and their indication, without the benefit of words.

125. Once, on the banks of the Godavari, in the famous town of Rajahmundhry, Sree Vasudeva Anand encamped. His family name was Saraswati.

126. He was greater than the great, highly omniscient, and a devout and orthodox follower of the Karma Marg. His fame was unending like the Ganga and reverberated even to the nether regions of the earth.

127. Hearing about him by word of mouth, one Pundalik Rao and others, residents of Nanded, who were devout, firmly decided to have his *darshan*.

128. Anyway, later on that whole group left Nanded and came to Rajahmundhry, on the banks of the Godavari, early morning, for the *darshan* of the Swami.

129. As it was the auspicious early morning time, the whole group from Nanded, set out for the banks of the Ganga, for a bath, while chanting *stotras* and scriptures.

130. The group found Swami sitting there and bowed to him with eight-fold prostrations, with devotion. In the natural course of their conversation about generalities, Shirdi was mentioned.

131. When Sai's name was heard by him, the Swami folded his hands in salutation and said: "He is my brother, who is desireless. I have excessive love for him".

132. Picking up a coconut from there, he gave it to Pundalik Rao and said : "Bowing down at the lotus feet of my brother, offer this, whenever you go to Shirdi.

133. "Convey to him my salutations and request him to have mercy and grace towards this humble one. Do not forget me and let your love for me grow uninterruptedly.

134. "Whenever you go next to Shirdi, offer this to my brother, with reverence and without fail.

135. "As a rule, we swamis are forbidden and do not bow to any one else. But breaking this rule, in the present context, can only be beneficent.

136. "Therefore, when you take Sai's *darshan*, do not forget this matter. Offer this coconut at Sai's feet, without fail".

137. After hearing these words of the Swami, Pundalik Rao bowed at his feet and said: "I will act in accordance with the Swami's instructions.

138. "I accept your instructions with profound reverence and consider myself blessed to be so entrusted". Pundalik Rao left from there, after surrendering whole-heartedly to the Swami.

139. When the Swami called Baba his brother, was it meaningless? Baba acted in accordance with the *Shrutis* being an '*Agnihotri*', offering oblations to the fire in the morning and the evening.

140. The fire, which was called *Dhuni* by the people, was always in front of Baba, and kept burning day and night. This was Baba's vow.

141. *Agnihotra* and other such performances are prescribed for inner purification. Baba adopted this means to make the people follow a particular way and to achieve *Brahmanhood*.

142. Sree Vasudeva Anand Saraswati was an ascetic and also followed the same vow (being an *Agnihotri*). No wonder than that he called Baba his brother! Could he speak in vain?

143. Later, before even a month had passed, the opportunity arose for Pundalik Rao to set out for Sai's *darshan*, taking four friends along with him.

144. He took his baggage, a variety of fruits and carefully remembered to take that coconut. They all set out for Sai's *darshan*, with joy and unperturbed minds.

145. Later, when they got off at Manmad, there was still some time for the departure of the train to Kopergaon. As they were very thirsty, they went to a nearby stream.

146. As drinking water on an empty stomach is harmful for the body, someone brought out a small bundle of *chivada* tied in the corner of a cloth, to eat as a light snack.

147. On putting just a pinch of the *chivada* into the mouth, the *chivada* was found to be very pungent. Without a coconut the *chivada* was useless. The whole effort seemed wasted.

148. Then one of them said to them all: "I remember a stratagem. Break

the coconut and mix it with the *chivada*. Then, savour the taste of the *chivada*".

149. No sooner was the coconut mentioned, then one was found ready at hand. There was no delay in breaking it. Mixing it with the *chivada*, improved the taste. Thereafter, they drank that water.

150. The coconut was mentioned and there was one ready at hand. Nobody asked to whom it belonged. The hunger was so overpowering that they all forgot.

151. Be that as it may be. They sat in the train to Kopergaon and went forward to their destination. On the way, Pundalik Rao remembered that particular coconut.

152. Seeing that Shirdi was near by, Pundalik Rao was in a mental turmoil, realising that the coconut given by Vasudeva Anand had been mixed with the *chivada* by mistake.

153. When he realised that the coconut was broken, Pundalik Rao was filled with fear and his whole body trembled. He had committed a sin against a saint.

154. He was most remorseful. What a sin he had committed? He had earned the curse of the Swami! 'My lamenting over it is useless.

155. For the coconut to have been put to such a use was a great trap. Pundalik Rao's mind was stunned and he was nonplussed.

156. 'Now, what can I offer Baba? In what manner can I explain this to him? How can I show my face to him? I have lost the coconut, irrevocably'.

157. Pundalik Rao was very depressed thinking about having made a light snack of that which had to be offered at Sai's feet. He said: "This is an insult of a saint".

158. Now, when Baba asks for the coconut, all would have to hang their heads in shame, as they had made a light snack of it, at Manmad. This was the turmoil that all faced from within.

159. It would be a shame to tell the truth that they did not have the coconut with them that day. To tell a lie would not serve any purpose, as Sai Maharaj was omniscient.

160. Be it so. The whole group was filled with joy on taking Sai's *darshan*. Eyes were filled with tears of joy and their faces reflected their bliss.

161. Now-a-days, we send wireless messages, day or night, and boast about it, taking pride in doing so.

162. For this, buildings have to be constructed and a lot of expenditure

has to be incurred. The saints do not need these means. They send messages by telepathy.

163. At the time when the Swami had given the coconut to Pundalik Rao, he had already sent a message to Sainath by telepathy.

164. When Pundalik Rao was taking *darshan*, Sai Baba, on his own, said: "Bring me that article which you have brought from my brother".

165. Then, that dejected Pundalik Rao held Sree Baba's feet and said: "What shall I say, except to beg for your forgiveness.

166. "I did remember the coconut. But to satisfy our hunger, when we went to the stream, all of us forgot.

167. "There, when we made a light snack of the *chivada* this very coconut was broken and mixed with it. Therefore, I will bring another coconut. Please accept it without hesitation".

168. Saying this, Pundalik Rao began to get up to get the fruit. Others saw Sai Maharaj hold him by the hand and prevent him from going.

169. "Unknowingly, I have broken faith. You are merciful, give me shelter under your fold. Forgive me, O' Merciful One! I am utterly guilty.

170. "I have disregarded the words of a virtuous saint like the Swami; and I have eaten the fruit which was to be offered to you.

171. "This is a transgression against a saint. Is there anything to mitigate this sin? How impudent have I become!"

172. Then hearing about the incident as it had happened, Sree Sainath laughingly said: "Why did you take the coconut when you were not going to take care of it?

173. "My brother had full faith in your words, firmly believing that you would give my article to me.

174. "And what was the result of it? Is this your trustworthiness? My brother's desire remained unfulfilled. Is this how you work?"

175. He added: "The worth of that fruit cannot be matched by giving any number of others! Whatever had to happen, has happened. Why unnecessarily brood over it?

176. "It was only by my resolve that the Swami gave you the coconut and that fruit was broken by my volition. Why do you unnecessarily take the doership?

177. "You are feeling guilty because you have an ego. Just be egoless. You will be free from all guilt.

178. "Why is there pride in doing a good or meritorious deed? And why does one shirk away from a sinful one? The result of both is the same! Therefore, act without the sense of doership.

179. "It occurred to me that you should see me. Therefore, the coconut was entrusted into your hands. This is the truth, verily, verily, verily.

180. "After all, you are my children. The fruit that you have eaten is as good as being offered to me. Believe that I have definitely received it".

181. When Pundalik Rao understood this, then his mind calmed down with Sai's words and his anxiety dissolved gradually.

182. The loss of the coconut was only a pretext, for giving the advice to clarify the anxiety-ridden minds. Thus all of them who were full of pride became free of the ego and felt blameless, and guiltless.

183. The essence of this story is that those whose minds are free of pride are qualified to attain spirituality and can easily go across the ocean of existence.

184. Now listen to the experience of the third devotee which is sweet and novel. It is indicative of both Baba's immeasurable grandeur and greatness of authority.

185. In Bandra *taluka*, to the north of the township of Bandra, in Santacruz town lived the devotee Dhurandhar.

186. All the brothers had love and reverence for the saints. They had firm trust in Sree Ram. They had a singular faith in chanting Sree Ram's name. They did not like unnecessarily dabbling in the affairs of others.

187. They lead simple lives, and so did their children. Even the women in the family behaved in a faultless manner. Lord Vishnu (Chakrapani) was therefore, indebted to them.

188. Balaram was one of them. He was a devotee of Vitthal and a person of sacred celebrity. He was honoured in every princely court and he was liked by all.

189. This gem was born on this earth on 19th February 1878, to a mother who was a devotee of Sree Ram.

190. He was an ornament of the *Pathare Prabhu* caste, of a famous family and lineage. In the year 1878, he was born in Bombay.

191. He had a western education and was a qualified advocate. He was well-versed in philosophy and was well-known as a learned man, everywhere.

192. He was greatly devoted to the deity Pandurang and supremely inclined towards spirituality. Though his father's family deity was Ram, his own worship was for Vitthal.

193. All the brothers held good positions and their conduct was always righteous. As they came from a pure lineage, they had a pure culture. But Balaram was unexcelled.

194. He had the ability to put forward well-reasoned, substantive and appealing arguments; he had a simple and pure way of thinking; a sharp intellect but good and righteous behaviour. These were his virtues and they were worth emulating.

195. He had served his community and written and published an account of it. On completing the work that he had undertaken, he decided to attain spirituality.

196. In this field also he surpassed others and after completing the *Bhagvad Gita* and *Dnyaneshwari* became proficient in these texts. He became a man of repute in *Adhyatma*.

197. He was a great devotee of Sai. He became one with the Supreme Spirit in 1925, at a young age. Listen to a short biography about him.

198. On the 9th of June, 1925, after finishing his journey in this world, he merged in Lord Vitthal.

199. On an auspicious day in April 1912, the opportunity arose for the Dhurandhar brothers to have the saint's *darshan* in Sai's durbar.

200. Six months earlier, his eldest brother Babuji, along with Vaman Rao, had taken *darshan* and returned happily.

201. To have the same sweet experience as they had, all the others including Balaram went there to have the benefit of the novel *darshan*.

202. Even before their arrival, Baba openly said: "To-day, several people from my *Durbar* are going to come here".

203. Hearing about this loving remark, the Dhurandhar brothers were greatly surprised as they had not intimated anyone of their trip to Shirdi. How did Baba come to know of it?

204. Later, seeing Sai, they ran and embraced his feet. Slowly the conversation began and every one was happy and contented.

205. Besides, when he saw that the people had gathered, Baba spoke again: "See, these are the people of the *Durbar*, about whose coming I had spoken".

206. And, listen to what Baba said further. Every word is true. "Remember that we know each other since the last sixty generations".

207. Balaram and the brothers, all of them full of humility, stood before Baba with their hands folded and gazing at the feet of Sree Sai.

208. On having Sree Sai's *darshan*, Balaram and all the others felt enthusiastic and excessively devoted and loving. They considered that the trip was worth their efforts.

209. The eyes were filled with tears; the throats were choked with great emotion; they experienced horripilation over their bodies; and all the eight satvik emotions filled them.

210. Seeing Balaram's state, Sainath was pleased. He began talking to all of them, relating loving stories and giving advice.

211. "He who worships me in the moonlit fortnight, when the moon is waxing, and offers to me love and all sentiments, is blessed.

212. "He who with complete faith engages himself in the service of his Guru, the Lord is indebted to him always. No one can view him with evil intentions.

213. "He who does not waste even half a moment and who has a liking for the worship of the Lord and the Guru, they will give him infinite or perpetual happiness and enable him to cross to the other shore."

214. Hearing such words, everybody's eyes were filled with tears of joy; their minds were filled with happiness; and their hearts were overpowered by emotions.

215. This garland of the words of Sai was worn by all with obeisance. All were filled with joy. It was the reason why they were all filled with devotion.

216. So be it. They went to the wada later and rested after their meal. In the afternoon they went again and prostrated before Baba.

217. Balaram, with great humility, began pressing Baba's feet. Then Baba extended the *chillum* to him and made a sign to him to smoke it.

218. Then, considering the *chillum* as a *Prasad*, though he was not in the habit of smoking it, Balaram took a few puffs with difficulty and handing it back to Baba, bowed to him with devotion.

219. It was a fortunate day for Balaram. From that day, his asthma was cured and he was well satisfied.

220. This asthma had not troubled him just recently. He had been

suffering from it for full six years. Yet it was cured, as if a *mantra* had been whispered into his ear. The *chillum* had such power.

221. From the time that he took a deep-drawn pull at the *chillum* and returned it, after bowing with humility, the asthma disappeared. It did not recur, at all.

222. But one day, in between, Balaram got a cough which surprised everyone, as no one could understand its cause.

223. Later, when they went deep into the matter, it was discovered that Baba had left his mortal coil on that day itself and had given an indication to his devotee.

224. The day that Balaram got an attack of the cough was the day when Baba had surrendered his body to the earth and gave an indication of it.

225. From that day, he never again suffered from the cough till his dying day. Can anyone ever forget this experience of the *chillum*?

226. That was a Thursday and the day for the procession to the *chavadi*. Thereby, the joy was multiplied two-fold. It was truly a memorable day.

227. From eight to nine, in the night, before Baba, in the courtyard, *bhajans* were sung to the beating of various instruments such as the *tal mridang* etc. with great interest and elan.

228. The *abhangs* were sung at one place, while the palanquin was decorated at another. After the palanquin was ready, Baba then started for the *chavadi*.

229. Earlier, I have described the unique *chavadi* procession in chapter thirty-seven. It will be a repetition here.

230. Baba spent one night in the *Masjid* and the next in the *chavadi*. This routine of Baba was continued by him till the end.

231. To see the *chavadi* celebration, loving Balaram was filled with enthusiasm. Therefore, when it was time for the *chavadi* procession, all the Dhurandhars returned.

232. The men and women of Shirdi village accompanied Baba, shouting acclamations with zeal and started for the *chavadi*.

233. The horse, whose name was Shyamsunder, was covered with a cloth, woven with golden threads, and was ornamented. He lead the procession, prancing ahead.

234. Various musical instruments, such as the horn, large brass trumpet, and the *tutari*, played. The ornamented Shyamakaran,

along with the palanquin and Sai were taken in procession. Sai walked along with the devotees, as some held an ornamental umbrella over him.

235. Some carried flags and paper decorations in their hands. Some held the ornamental umbrella over Sree's head. Some waved whisks and peacock feathers; and others holding torches surrounded them on all sides.

236. Taking the harmonious *mridang*, tal, *ghol* and other sweet sounding instruments, a multitude of devotees walked on either side of Baba, doing *bhajans*.

237. Be this as it may be. When this beautiful procession came before the *chavadi*, Baba stopped and facing in the northerly direction made his ritualistic movements with his hand.

238. On the right hand, Baba's Bhagat (Mhalsapati) walked holding the fold of Baba's garment; and on the left walked Tatya Patil holding a lantern.

239. Baba's complexion was golden-hued; and when the light of the lamps fell on it, it shone like yellow gold mixed with copper. The beauty of his face was like the light of dawn.

240. Blessed was the pure *darshan* of that moment. Baba stood facing the north, in deep concentration, and it seemed as if he was summoning someone, as he partially raised his right hand.

241. From there, he was taken further upto the *chavadi* and made to take a seat with great honour. Beautiful ornaments and clothes were offered to him and *sandal-wood* paste was smeared on his limbs.

242. Sometimes an aigrette of jewels worn in the turban was offered; sometimes a gem-studded ornament for the turban; sometimes a plume; sometimes a golden ornamented crown; sometimes a gold-embroidered cloak.

243. Necklaces of diamonds, pearls and emeralds were put around Baba's neck lovingly. Some adorned his forehead with a round mark of fragrant musk.

244. Some washed his feet and worshipped them; some applied saffron and other fragrances to the body and put betel leaves in his mouth.

245. They waved the five-wick lamp, filling it with camphor, over Baba. The beauty of his visage was beyond compare.

246. The luminosity surrounding Sai's face made him appear exactly like the image of Pandurang. Dhurandhar was stupified to see it.

247. Just as no one on earth can bear to see the flash of lightning in the sky, similarly the effulgence of Sai's forehead, when it shone, blinded all eyes.

248. The *Kakad Arati* used to take place in the early mornings. Dhurandhar and others went there. There too they saw the same lustre on Baba's face.

249. From then on, till he died, Balaram had complete faith at Sai's feet. It was definitely established and it never wavered even a little bit.

250. Hemad surrenders at Sai's feet. The book will be concluded in the next chapter. In the narration, there will be a review. Give me your attention for the last time.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the fifty-first chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita* written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "A Triad of Stories of Three Devotees".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

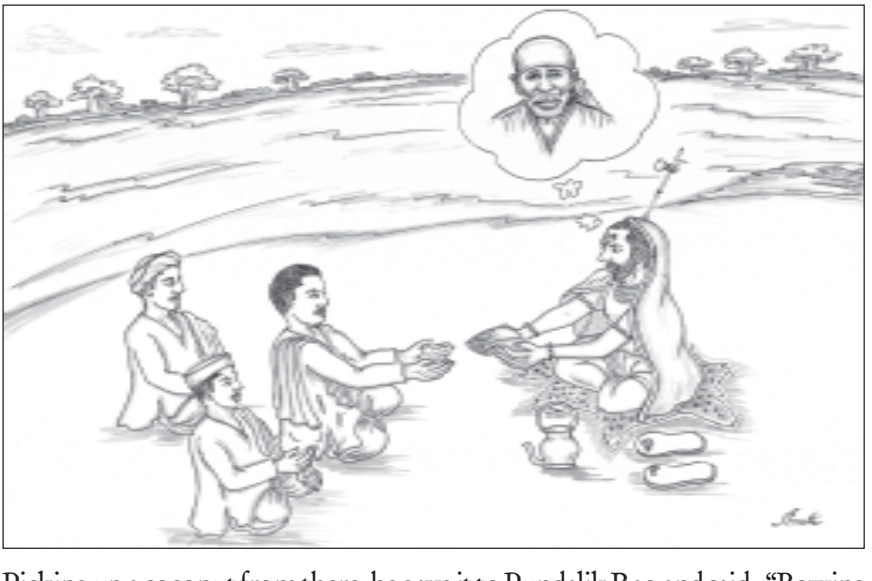
May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. West of the Peninsula of India, the Malabar Ghats.
2. There was a lot of property there, belonging to Dixit.
3. It was the 5th of July 1926.
4. The jewel that grants all desires.
5. The wish fulfilling tree.
6. The stone that alchemises iron into gold.
7. The wish-fulfilling cow.

Dixit's end came about as assured by Sai's words. He died with the words of Sai's glory on his lips. It happened before my (Hemadpant) very eyes. (Ch. 51, ovi 103)

We were both sitting on a bench in a train next to one another, engrossed in the stories of Sai Samartha, when he seemed to take off suddenly in the plane. (Ch. 51, ovi 104)



Picking up a coconut from there, he gave it to Pundalik Rao and said : "Bowing down at the lotus feet of my brother, offer this, whenever you go to Shirdi. (Ch. 51, ovi 132)

52

An overall view, which summarises the Book

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Now, let us do a review; and thereby conclude the book with a table of contents[1], and an overall view, which summarises the book.
2. The experiences that Baba's devotees had when he was in body have been published in "Sai Leela". Baba got this book written so that they could recollect them.
3. "Sai Leela" is supremely pure and holy. In it, the 'Satcharita' has been published in a serial form, chapter after chapter. Read this as the biography of your own Guru (*Gurucharitra*). It will awaken you and give you advice relating to this and the other world.
4. There is a multitude of stories about Baba. Yet, this Hemadpant, ignorant of intimate knowledge of scriptures or even knowledge in general, was made to write his biography, by holding his hand in his own.
5. In the case of some gurus, they narrate their own fame to their disciples. After they leave their bodies, an inspiration arises to write a book about them.
6. When Sai narrated stories of different kinds, they were deep and profound. The listeners became deeply engrossed and forgot their hunger and thirst.
7. Those who have seen Sai with their own eyes have had their three-fold miseries destroyed. He, whose power was such, how can he be described in detail?
8. Such a Sai, who was famous for his magnanimity, got this biography of his fame written down for the upliftment of those who were devoted to him.

9. After bathing in the holy Godavari and taking *darshan* of Baba's *samadhi*, listen to this *Satcharita*. The three-fold afflictions will be quelled.
10. Just casually telling the stories about him leads one to unknowingly embrace spirituality. But when you glance at this book, a multitude of sins will be destroyed.
11. Those who desire to end the cycle of birth and death, this wearisome coming and going, should enjoin themselves to the Guru's feet and constantly remember and chant his name with devotion.
12. Inadvertence is the cause of illusory knowledge. Inattention to the form of the *Atman* leads to the endless cycle of birth and death, and is the root cause for ultimate destruction.
13. Greed means illusory knowledge. What is not *Atman* such as the body, mind, senses and to have pride in that, is called death by the wise, after due consideration.
14. If the ocean of Sai stories is churned, then the narration of Sai's stories will be sweet and newer nuances will always surface. The downfall of the listeners will be averted.
15. If one concentrates deeply on Sai's attributes, which are like a gigantic overflowing vessel, the form of the *Atman*, which is subtlest, will manifest after the disappearance of the physical form.
16. Unless one gets absorbed in the physical, virtuous form with attributes, one cannot understand or realise the lustre of the *Atman*. *Parabrahman* without the attributes, is difficult to understand completely or is beyond comprehension.
17. Sai pulled his own loving devotees, who had faith with his might, by giving *darshan* of his feet and while they were still in body made them forget that body. They were put on the spiritual path without their knowing it.
18. When the river embraces the sea it forgets its identity. Similarly, when a devotee surrenders, Sai ensures that the devotee no longer has a feeling of duality or separateness.
19. When two flames of a lamp embrace one another and become one, the dual state is immediately lost and they become one lamp with oneness.
20. Can the camphor and its fragrance, the sun and its light, gold and its lustre be truly separate?
21. Just as the river on entering the sea becomes the sea itself truly, and the salt when put into the sea merges into the sea immediately,

22. similarly when the devotees surrender to Sai; their separateness no longer remains. The devotees will become one with Sai, leaving aside their egos.
23. Whether waking, dreaming or sleeping, in any of these states, if one is replete with the thoughts of Sai, then what else is it except a release from the worldly existence.
24. So be it. Now, prostrating myself I ask for this boon at your feet — do not let my desires attract me to any other place, suddenly.
25. One who fills the space and the manifestation from *Brahman* to a pillar, from a small vessel to a house, like the sky within and without, and knows not the slightest differentiation,
26. to whom all devotees are equal, to whom praise nor insult mattered, who found nothing pleasant or unpleasant, and who had not an iota of inequality,
27. I surrender to that Sai *Samartha*, remembering whom results in every thing being achieved. I place my head at his feet for all times so that I may be fulfilled.
28. Now I offer my salutations to the virtuous listeners, who are devout. You have been good friends. I request you truly to listen to what I say now.
29. Every month, you have set aside time to listen to the stories uptil now. Do not forget him whose stories you heard, even for a moment.
30. As long as you listen to the stories of Sai with love, till that time, for me who is the narrator, Sai gives enthusiasm or zeal!
31. If the listeners are not completely attentive, the narrator can never be happy. Without mutual joy, futile is the trouble of listening.
32. This ocean of existence is very difficult to cross, where innumerable waves of attachment arise and dash against the banks of bad thoughts, toppling down even trees of fortitude.
33. Winds of egotism blow forcibly and make the ocean turbid and agitated. Huge crocodiles, in the form of anger and hatred etc., move there fearlessly.
34. Innumerable eddies in the form of pride of "I and mine", cravings and suspicions whirl there. A multitude of marine creatures such as hatred, jealousy, disdain and such abound there.
35. Even though this ocean is fierce and terrible, the *Sadguru* is its *Agasti* [2] and will demolish it. Those who are slaves of the dust of his feet, have no fear of it at all.
36. Therefore, Sai *Samartha Sadguru* by becoming the ship for crossing

the ocean of existence will take us all, who have taken refuge in him, to the other bank.

37. This ocean of existence is extremely insurmountable. Make Sai's feet your boat which will take us across to the other bank, without fear. Observe the miracle of faith.

38. By observing such a vow, one does not experience the acute pain of worldly existence. There is no other gain better than this. This itself is the strength that stands us in good stead.

39. May the devotees attain such a state that they have a deep devotion at Sai's feet and they keep Sai's form so firmly fixed before their eyes that they see only Sai in all creatures.

40. By becoming self-willed in my previous birth, I have slipped. At least now, I should achieve absolution by becoming free from desires.

41. Blessed are those devotees of Sai, who have this firm belief, and are without fear, that Sree *Samartha* is their protector and nothing can touch them.

42. So be it. Now it occurs to me to ask a boon from him, by holding on to his feet on behalf of all the devotees.

43. I pray that this book reaches every home and is read and recited regularly; that it is lovingly repeated ritually; and that it removes their difficulties.

44. Whosoever reads this book within seven consecutive days, with love and faith, after proper ablutions, his calamities will be removed.

45. This book is woven with the threads of spirituality; it is full of stories of Krishna and the *Brahman* ; it abounds with the essence or nectar of the unity of *Brahman* and *Atman* and it overflows with the unparalleled joy of non-duality.

46. This is Eknath's poetry which is as pleasing as the garden of India. It is the *Vrindavan* of thirty-two parts (chapters). The wise and the ignorant savour this sweet and pleasing dish made from milk[3].

47. Listening to this *Satcharita* or reciting it regularly will result in the feet of Sai *Samartha* removing all the difficulties without any delay.

48. Those desiring wealth will get it; those who are upright in their conduct and dealings will have complete renown. The results will depend upon their faith. Without devotion, you will not have the experience.

49. Reading the book with reverence, Sai *Samartha* is propitiated. He destroys ignorance and poverty and grants knowledge and untold prosperity.

50. This book was written due to an indication by Sai; and it was his secret desire. Blessed is that devotee who is attached to his feet.

51. One should make it a practice to read at least one chapter of this *Satcharita* every day, with a calm and concentrated mind. It will bring immeasurable joy and happiness.

52. One who desires his own welfare should really read this book. He will be obliged by Sai, through all the cycles of life and he will remember Sai with overwhelming joy in birth after birth.

53. The book should definitely be read at one's own home at Sai's festivals, such as *Gurupurnima*, *Gokul Astami*, *Punyatithi* and *Ramnavmi*.

54. One's status in the next birth is determined by the desires of the mind in this one. The *Shastras* also support the belief that one is born again according to one's tendencies at the time of death.

55. Sree Sai is the support of his devotees. Without him the impediments in our way are not destroyed. What is the wonder in finding that the mother has tender feelings for her children?

56. How can I narrate stories beyond this? The words fail me. It seems that it would be better to be silent. This would be the best way to praise him.

57. Yet, if one has an acute desire for liberation, then perform only virtuous deeds always. Practise the nine forms of devotion, including listening to his stories etc. and one will be purified from within.

58. This is not possible without the grace of the Guru. Without him there is no knowledge of the Supreme Being. One who always remembers that "I am *Brahman*" has firm faith and inclination towards the Guru.

59. The relationship is like that of a father and son, between the Guru and the disciple. The word Guru is only used as an honorific. The father makes one worthy of worldly happiness but the Guru grants happiness in this world as well as the other.

60. The father gives transient wealth but the Guru grants that which is boundless. He will make you experience the imperishable and place it in your hands without your knowledge.

61. The mother keeps one inside the womb for nine months and then brings one out after birth. The Guru is the opposite of the mother. He takes you in from the outer self.

62. Ultimately, remembering the Guru, constantly, at the time of leaving the body, the disciple will be absorbed in *Brahman*, undoubtedly goaded by the Guru.

63. The impact of the hand of the teacher, when striking, will lead to the uprooting of birth and death and if the teacher brings about the fall of the raiment (body) then who indeed is more fortunate than the disciple.

64. It will be necessary (for the Guru) to take in the hand a sword, a mace, a battle-axe or a pike or some other instrument. On being struck, the disciple will have Real Consciousness and the corporal form of the great preceptor will be seen.

65. Howsoever much one cares for the body, at some point of time, it is going to perish. Therefore if it is struck by the Guru's hand he will be relieved of the next birth.

66. Strike me so much, as to kill me; and cut off my pride from its roots whereby there will be no rebirth. Strike me in such a way that it is difficult for me to endure.

67. Burn my deeds, good and evil. End my righteous or unrighteous behaviour, whereby I will become supremely happy. Tear and drive away, in this manner, my delusion on account of desires.

68. Drive away my doubts and desires, and make me unchanging of purpose. I do not want meritorious deeds nor do I want sins. I do not want the trouble of another birth.

69. On surrendering to you, you are there on all the four sides, to the east and the west and in all directions, above in the sky and below in the nether regions.

70. You dwell every where and even within me. What more can I say? I am troubled by the thought of the difference between you and me.

71. Therefore Hemad surrenders whole-heartedly. He holds the feet of the *Sadguru* firmly. By avoiding the cycle of birth and death, he gets himself uplifted.

72. By making Hemad the instrument, he wrote his own life story for the upliftment of his innumerable devotees. Is this not an unparalleled deed?

73. It was incredible that this Sree Sai *Samartha*'s *Charita* should have been written at my hands! If it had not been for Sai's Grace, it would have been impossible for an insignificant person like me.

74. My association with him was not of long standing. I had not the experience to know saints nor the discerning capacity. Moreover, I was always doubting and an unbeliever.

75. I had never worshipped anyone exclusively and with singular devotion; I had never sat even for a moment to do *bhajans*. By

getting his life story written at the hands of such a person, he demonstrated what he could do to the people.

76. In order to fulfil his own words, Sai himself reminds me about the incidents for this book and accomplishes his own aims. 'Hemad' is used only for name's sake.

77. Can a mosquito lift the Meru mountain? Or can a lapwing empty out the ocean? But when the *Sadguru*'s support is there, the miraculous can happen.

78. So be it. Now, listeners, I do obeisance to you. This book is now complete. I offer to Sai what is Sai's.

79. I prostrate before the whole group of listeners, young and old. In your company, this series of *Saicharita* has been completed.

80. Who am I to complete it? This is useless pride, for when Sai is the holder of the reins (or strings, like a puppeteer), then who am I to say I have done it?

81. Therefore, abandoning pride which is the root cause of all miseries, let us sing the praises of one's own Guru, who knows the inner tendencies, and is enlightening. I now complete this *yagna* of words (speech).

82. This book is complete. My desire has been fulfilled. The work undertaken for Sai is complete. I have accomplished the object of my existence.

83. All one's desires will be fulfilled by reading such a book from beginning to end; and by holding the feet of the *Sadguru* close to the heart one will cross the ocean of worldly existence.

84. The sick will become healthy; the impoverished will become rich; quietude of mind will be gained by people suffering from indecision; and even the destitute will become generous.

85. Repeated reading of the book will exorcise demons and cure epilepsy. Listening to it will be beneficial for the dumb, blind, handicapped and the deaf.

86. Even those who have forgotten the almighty Lord, lured by ignorance, will be uplifted.

87. Even those will be uplifted who, though human behave like demons and waste their bodies in vain, believing this worldly existence to be a mine of happiness.

88. Incredible are the deeds of Sainath! Hemad was established at his feet eternally. By channeling him into his own service, he got this task accomplished.

89. In the end, to the *Sadguru* who is the Controller of the Universe, the Inspirer of Self-realisation, I offer my opus and my head at his feet forever[4].

Notes :

1. Unfortunately, Hemadpant passed away and the table of contents was not found in his papers. It was therefore composed by an able and worthy devotee of Sai Baba, Mr. B.V. Deo, the Retd. *Mamlatdar*. The notes of this chapter were found on slips of paper, in some disarray, incomplete and unintelligible in some places. It appears that Hemadpant planned to end the book with this chapter, so that it would have only fifty-two chapters like "Sree Guru *Charitra*". It may be noted that Hemadpant took seven years to write this book.
2. Agastya Muni, in order to kill the demon Kaliya hidden in the ocean, is credited to have drunk the waters on the request of the Deities.
3. Both the ovis, numbers 45 and 46, seem discordant here.
4. In the hand-written manuscript, the concluding ovi, as in the case of other chapters, was not found.

Baba in divine ecstasy

53

"Avataranika" (Epitome)

I bow down to Sree Ganesh
I bow down to Sree Saraswati
I bow down to the Guru
I bow down to the Family Deity
I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra
I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Sree Sai is truly *Brahman* incarnate; the greatest among the saints, the Lord Paramount, whose fame has reached every corner of the earth and is the grantor of intelligence and inspiration.
2. I surrender to him with whole-hearted devotion. I do obeisance at his holy feet. He removes the fear of this mundane existence, and breaks the cycle of birth and death.
3. In the previous chapter it had been promised to give a review and then a table of contents or index, before concluding the book.
4. Though Pant Hemad said so, it did not happen that way. The table of contents was not drawn up or was overlooked.
5. He who starts the book should himself complete it, by giving the table of contents in the end. This is the usual procedure.
6. But there are exceptions to a rule; and this can be seen here itself. Nothing happens as one wishes. Only Baba's wishes are over-riding.
7. Hemad died unexpectedly. Everyone was sorrowful. The table of contents was not to be traced; and everyone was confused.
8. Annasaheb's records were difficult to find. His son, Shri Gajanan, made efforts to look and gave me whatever was needed.
9. Annasaheb was thrifty and did not waste even a scrap of paper. He worked with grace and tidiness, as was his nature.
10. He wrote a chapter on bits of paper and gave them, as is, to the printer. Unnecessary expense hurt him. He could not be compared to anyone else.
11. He felt pity for those lifeless, helpless scraps of paper. How would

they be uplifted unless they served the lion amongst the saints i.e. Sree Sai Baba?

12. Hemad must have felt this way and, therefore, collected these scraps of paper, so that they could also serve. That must have been the exalted intention.

13. The last chapter must have been done in the same way, and must have been written on scraps of paper. A lot of thought was given to the problem, yet the index could not be found amongst the bits of paper.

14. The matter was told to Gajananrao and others. It was also told to Babasaheb Tarkhad, the Treasurer of the Shirdi *Sansthan*. All of them were of the opinion that the index should be there.

15. Babasaheb fixed a time limit and published this also in the Sree Sai *Leela*. The time lapsed, yet the index did not come forth.

16. Hemad, Govind, was a mine of virtues. He knew the *Vedant* by heart which was at his command. His book exhibited the Guru's grace, like *prasad*. Incredible was the Guru's grace.

17. Innumerable were the devotees of *Sadguru* Sai from amongst whom Hemadpant was a gem of a poet. Only someone, who was as knowledgeable as he was, would be capable of writing it.

18. The index did not come forth from anywhere. I felt very dejected. I prayed to *Duttaguru*, Sree Saibaba, and pleaded for his mercy.

19. I am dull-witted and insignificant, without studious contemplation or even a trace of knowledge. Being totally devoid of poetic tendency, how could I compose verses!

20. But there was one support that I had. When Sree *Duttaguru* is favourable, even the Meru mountain can be lifted as easily as a mosquito. His powers are great.

21. Again I prayed to *Umaraman* Shiva, so that Sai Narayana would become merciful and give me the inspiration to write the index immediately.

22. I do not have the capacity to compose poetry. Sree *Gururaya* is aware of my limitations. Placing my head at his feet, I shall begin writing the index.

23. This part of the book, viz. the index, will be composed by Sai *Vakratunda* (*Ganapati*). His grandeur is unparalleled and immense. My mouth is only his instrument.

24. In the first chapter is the invocation to the remover of difficulties and the cause of the Universe, to the ornament round the neck of Uma and Shiva – obeisance to Sree Ganesha.

25. Obeisance also to the wonderful Goddess of Speech, full of wisdom, Sree Sharada, who entices the world and is the grantor of whatever is desired.

26. Obeisance to the Lord Sai, the Family Deity, the relations, the Guru brethren, the saints and virtuous people who are incarnations of God; and surrender to the *Sadguru*, who is the abode of salvation.

27. By narrating the story of the grinding of the wheat and how the cholera epidemic was removed was explained and the powers and greatness of Sai were described.

28. In the second chapter, the purpose for writing the book is given, also the naming of Hemadpant, the end of the debate of the necessity of a Guru and the first *darshan* of Hemad.

29. In the third chapter it has been fully explained how the permission was given for writing the book by Sai's own words and the story about the Rohilla.

30. Next, the reason for the appearance of saints and sages, who are ornaments of the Ruler of the World, on the earth, has been explained in detail.

31. And the first arrival of Sai, Avatar of Dutta, Son of Atri, the wish-fulfilling tree, in Shirdi village – all that is described in the fourth.

32. The disappearance from Shirdi village and the re-appearance in the company of the well-to-do Patil which surprised all;

33. the gathering of Gangagir and other saints, the carrying of water in pots on his own head from afar to create a garden is all fully mentioned in the fifth.

34. In the sixth chapter, the big festival of Ramnavami where Bala Buva was the *Kirtankar* and the renovation of the *Masjid* is narrated in detail.

35. Next is about yogic practices of *Samadhi*, *Khandayog*, *Dhoti-Poti* etc., whether Baba was a Hindu or a Muslim; the unfathomable inner self of a *Saint*;

36. Baba's dress, behaviour, giving of medicines, smoking of *chillum*, caste, *dhuni*, lamps, his illness, and service to him - incomprehensible was the sight of all this!

37. The seventh by the learned poet excellently narrates matters about Bhagoji Shinde's leprosy, the medicine for the plague affecting Khaparde's son and Nana's Pandharpur *darshan* idea.

38. The unique greatness of human birth, the description of the mode

in which Sai asked for alms, the service of Bayjabai to the saints and the offering of food to Baba with her own hands;

39. how Baba, Tatya and Mhalsapati, all three of them, slept in the *Masjid* at night and Baba's excessive love for both of them, which was identical;

40. and the mutual love of Baba who was the repository of peace and knowledge, and Kushalchand of Rahta village is all delightfully narrated in the eighth chapter.

41. How greatly Tatyasaheb Noolkar, and Tatya Patil, who were great devotees, as well as the English gentleman repented for not following instructions;

42. how Baba made an offering to the five elements before savouring the food which had been given as alms, how Baba was qualified to seek alms is cleverly explained;

43. and the excellent story of how the famous Babasaheb Tarkhad, the staunch *Prathna Samajist*, became a devotee of Sai, whole-heartedly, are all given in the ninth chapter.

44. Yogeshwar Baba's bed, of a plank four-hands long and a span in width, hung from the rafters;

45. a touching account of when Baba first arrived in Shirdi, how many years he lived there and when he left the mortal coil;

46. though calm and desireless within, outwardly demonstrating a demonic nature and *Gururaya*'s unfailing inclination to lead the people together on a particular path;

47. the *Sadguru*'s tremendous skill in teaching the *Ved-shastras* and the essence of religion, spirituality and the code of behaviour, and testing the intellects of the devotees as well as the non-devotees;

48. Baba's usual seat, Baba's knowledge, Baba's meditation and Baba's dwelling – his power and his greatness – are fully described in the tenth chapter.

49. Baba's fame everywhere as being the embodiment of *Satchitanand*, Doctor Pandit's loving devotion, and the narration of the behaviour of Siddique (Falke);

50. his control over the clouds, his incredible power over fire and his protection from strong winds are interestingly described in the eleventh;

51. Kaka (Mahajani), Dhumal, Nimonkar, a Mamlatdar and a Doctor — different incidents about each of them were narrated sweetly.

52. And the unique Sai *darshan* of the *Agnihotri* from Nashik, the

doubting Muley, a disciple of Saint Gholapram, in the twelfth chapter.

53. Bala Shimpi's malaria was cured by giving curds to a black dog, and Bapusaheb's (Butti) cholera was eradicated by feeding him walnuts and pistachios;

54. the Swami from Alandi, who had pain in the ear, was cured only with blessings, and the diarrhoea that Kaka (Mahajani) suffered from was removed by peanuts;

55. The devotee Dattapant from Harda, who suffered from a servere stomach ache, was freed from his trouble by blessings, in front of everybody;

56. and one, Bhimaji Patil, had severe cough and tuberculosis. He was cured by an application of *udi* – all this is narrated in the thirteenth.

57. Seth Ruttonji, a Parsi from Nanded, a famous businessman who was dejected was granted a son, placing him in the seventh heaven;

58. how the saint Mauli Saheb of Nanded, who worked as a coolie and remained incognito, became known thanks to an indication from Sai is the amazing story in the fourteenth.

59. The *kirtan* practice of Narada was told by Baba to Das Ganu; and Cholkar was requited for his vow by giving him tea full of sugar;

60. a lizard from Aurangabad came and met one in the mosque, and the story of their chirrupings is narrated in the fifteenth.

61. A gentleman, well-endowed with wealth and children, came to Shirdi having learnt of Sai's fame, to acquire knowledge of *Brahman*;

62. one who desires the *Brahman* should be detached from the worldly life and the greed for wealth should be discarded, as a first step,

63. but if he could not give a loan of five rupees to Baba for a short while, even though he had a big roll of money in his clothes, how could he attain the *Brahman*!

64. The method by which Sai taught the lesson was beautiful and Hemad's words are like *prasad*, a mixture of milk and sugar. This enticing story is in the sixteenth.

65. The continuation of the earlier story, a detailed discussion of the knowledge of *Brahman*, total destruction of the greed for money, is the interesting narration in the seventeenth.

66. Sathe's story about the Guru *Charitra*, the story about Radhabai's *upadesha*, and the favour bestowed on Hemad are skillfully narrated in the eighteenth.

67. The detailed narration about this favour, and the in-depth thoughts

(of Hemad) according to the lesson taught by Sree Sai are given in the nineteenth.

68. Das Ganu commenced the "*Ishavasya Bhavartha Bodhini*". In that respect he had some doubts which he asked Baba.

69. Baba said that the maid-servant of Kaka (Dixit) would resolve it. The *Sadguru*'s greatness is extra-ordinary. An interesting narration of it is in the twentieth.

70. A virtuous district officer, another learned man Patankar and the third, a brilliant lawyer – all three were granted favours, as mentioned in the twenty-first.

71. *Mashidmai* helps to cross the ocean of existence. It is none other than *Dwarkamai*. Baba said this to all the people but no one understood its deepest meaning.

72. The virtues of *Mashidmai* were praised; Mirikar and Butti were saved from snake bites; Amir Shakkar's rheumatism was cured and he was saved from the danger of the snake.

73. Hemad was saved from the danger of a bite from the scorpion and others from a snake and untimely death – all these incidents are published in the twenty-second.

74. How the doubts of a student of *Yoga* were removed, how Madhavrao was cured of a snake bite; *dhuni* ; and fire-wood, and the killing of a goat are very interestingly described.

75. The respect and glamour of Bade Baba, the lack of obedience to the Guru's orders, his greed for more irrespective of what was given to him, and his dissatisfied nature;

76. Kaka Saheb, the best among the devotees, who had supreme and unswerving faith in the Guru's orders, and how the *Sadguru* sported with him is beautifully narrated in the twenty-third.

77. Making grains of grams the excuse, Hemadpant was given a lesson that without remembering the *Sadguru* nothing should be enjoyed (eaten);

78. Sai caused a quarrel between Anna Babare and Maushibai, and that uncommon incident of wit and humour has been sung by the inestimable poet in the twenty-fourth.

79. A devotee, Damu Anna Kasar, a resident of Ahmednagar, was desirous of doing a big business of cotton and rice.

80. There would definitely be a loss in the business. By eating the mangoes, sons will be born said Sai, the Sun of Knowledge. All this is described in the twenty-fifth.

81. A devotee named Pant, who was a disciple of another saint, was immediately given an indication, which made Pant overjoyous;

82. the son of devotee Harishchandra Pitale, who was suffering from epilepsy was completely cured by only a merciful glance;

83. Pitale was given three rupees and was told that he had been given two rupees earlier. Baba told him to worship them. It is a charming narration in the twenty-sixth.

84. Kaka (Mahajani) placed the Bhagvat *pothi* in the Lord's hands, with the hope of getting it back as *prasad* but the Lord gave it to Madhav (Shama);

85. the *pothi* of *Vishnusahasranam* was in the collection of a Ramadasi. Baba took it from there without his knowledge and gave that also to Madhavrao.

86. The story how Sai, the Cloud of Mercy, granted a boon to Shamrao (Madhavrao) by giving him the *Vishnusahasranam pothi* is narrated in the twenty-seventh.

87. Lakhmichand Munshi, Chidibai of Burhanpur and the most virtuous Brahmin, Megha, came to Baba's feet.

88. By giving them all a dream vision, gave them experience in the waking state. Incredible are the feats of the *Sadguru Mauli*. All this is lovingly narrated in the twenty-eighth.

89. A group of bhajan singers from Madras gathered at Shirdi to witness the spectacle of generosity and giving of charity by Baba, the guileless Shankar;

90. the way in which the examination of Raghunath Tendulkar's son and his pension problems were resolved are the pleasant *leelas* of Baba; and

91. how Dr. Captain Hate, who was a very loving devotee of Sai's feet, was given an early morning dream vision is the graceful story in the twenty-ninth.

92. A person named Kakaji Vaidya, a devotee of Saptashrungi Devi, was given a dream vision by the Devi, to have the *darshan* of Sai, the foremost amongst the saints;

93. Shamrao had taken a vow to the same *Devi*, so to fulfil that vow Shama went to Vani after thirty years; and

94. how Sai spoke "come to Shirdi" in the dreams of both, Seth Kushalchand of Rahata and the Punjabi Brahmin, Ramlal, is narrated in the thirtieth.

95. Vijayanand, a *Madrasi sanyasi*, set out for Manas Sarovar. Baba, Sree Hrishikesh personified, held him back at his own feet;

96. and the upliftment of the distinguished devotee Mankar, who hovered over Sai's feet like a bee over honey, and the afflicted, cruel tiger is beautifully narrated in the thirty-first.

97. The story about four virtuous people wandering in the woods, in search of God, and the *darshan* given by *Gururaya* to one (Baba) as he had shed his ego;

98. the unusual episode of the fasting lady Gokhalebai and another similar story told by Sai himself, are sung by Hemad in the thirty-second.

99. A friend of Narayan Jani was suddenly stung by a scorpion, while the daughter of another devotee was suffering from high fever;

100. how the difficult labour of Chandorkar's daughter frightened her and how unhappy and worried everyone was;

101. the staunch devotee Kulkarni Saheb, the *bhajan* singer Bala Bua really understood the efficacious power of the '*udi*';

102. and the enchanting story of the *dakshina* of Haribhau Karnik, a devotee full of faith and religious feelings, which teaches a lesson, are all in the thirty-third.

103. The great distress of the Malegaon doctor on account of the bone abscess of his nephew, the difficult illness of the staunch devotee Dr. Pillai from guinea-worms;

104. the torment of Bapaji of Shirdi (Shama's brother) on account of the bubonic plague of his wife, and the epilepsy of the young girl of Irani, which greatly troubled her;

105. the gentleman from Harda who was in great pain due to stones in his bladder and the difficult labour of a lady from Bombay, of the Kayasth Prabhu caste;

106. the complete removal of the above-mentioned maladies or troubles by the mere application of the *udi* without loss of time, are interestingly described in the thirty-fourth.

107. A friend of Mahajani, who totally believed in the Formless, became a devotee of the Form, after only one *darshan* ;

108. the greatest of Gurus turned grapes with seeds into seedless ones immediately and gave them to Dharamsi Jethabhai Thakkar, a solicitor from Bombay;

109. a Kayasth gentleman from Bandra who could not sleep at ease and Bala Patil of Nevasa both had experiences of the *udi* which are given in the thirty-fifth.

110. Two gentlemen from Goa had separately taken different vows – one for getting a job and another for finding a thief;

111. both had forgotten their vows but Sai *Samartha* made them remember. Who can describe the fame of him, who had the knowledge of the past, present and future and was omnipresent!

112. The wife of Sakharam of Aurangabad rushed to Sai's feet for the boon of a son. How her wish was fulfilled by giving a coconut is the story told, with a purpose, in the thirty-sixth.

113. Hemad describes the *chavadi* celebrations and festivities, after seeing them himself, in an interesting narration in the thirty-seventh.

114. After putting different ingredients a variety of items were cooked in the *handi* (cooking-pot) and distributed as *prasad* lunch to all – a pleasing narration of it is in the thirty-eighth.

115. The elucidation of the verse from the *Gita*, '*Tadviddhi Pranipatena*' is told to Chandorkar to remove his false pride about his knowledge of Sanskrit; and

116. the king among saints gave a dream vision to Bapusaheb Butti instructing him to build a temple – that is the narration in the thirty-ninth.

117. Deo gave a feeding to the Brahmins in honour of his mother's completion of vows, for which he invited Baba by writing a letter.

118. On that day, three eminent persons wearing the garb of *sanyasis* came and had their meals with the Brahmins. It is difficult to understand the sport of *Gururaya*!

119. After giving a dream vision to Hemad, Baba came for lunch in the form of a portrait – that is the lucid narration in the fortieth.

120. The poet narrates the story of the portrait at length to the devotees. The *Sadguru*'s greatness is inconceivable. The narration is enchanting and witty.

121. Assuming the *Rudra avatar* and becoming red as a blazing coal, Sree Sai showered a volley of abuses on Deo angrily.

122. The Lord Sai said: "Read the Sree *Dñyaneshwari* regularly" and even gave instructions in a dream about the method of reading. Hemad narrates this in the forty-first.

123. The application of the *Tripundra* by the devotee Date;[1] the early warning about Sai's leaving the body; averting the deaths of Ramchandra (Patil) and Tatya (Patil Kote); and

124. the story of Sai *Sadguru*'s leaving the body which caused deep sorrow

among the listeners and disturbed Hemad also—these are the holy stories in the forty-second.

125. The story about Baba's leaving the body which was certainly incomplete in the previous chapter is completed by Hemadpant in the forty-third, and forty-fourth.

126. Once when Kaka Saheb Dixit was reading the *Eknath Bhagvat*, with Kaka (Mahajani) and Madhav, had some doubts;

127. Madhav Rao clarified the doubt but Dixit was not convinced or satisfied. Anand Rao Pakhade narrated a dream and that removed the doubts;

128. Sai *Samartha* gave an explanation why Mhalsapati could not possibly sleep on a plank hung from the rafters—all stories skillfully told in the forty-fifth.

129. Baba's deeds are wonderful! He remained fixed in one place but roamed everywhere, showing people his miraculous appearances. Strange were his travels to Kashi and Gaya.

130. The gem among saints told Shama to go and attend the wedding celebrations of the son of Chandorkar, and Shama saw Baba at Gaya in a portrait at that time.

131. The earlier life story of two goats was narrated himself by Sai, the three-eyed one – pleasing, sweet, holy and deep is the story narration in the forty-sixth.

132. Similarly a story about a snake and a frog, or a greedy money lender and a borrower and their previous lives is told by Sai, who is truly Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar.

133. Enmity, murder and debt have to be repaid and for that there is re-birth – that is the nectar-like story that Baba imparts in a heart-warming narration in the forty-seventh.

134. One staunch devotee Shevade and the manner in which he faced his advocate's examination and the other a disbelieving Sapatnekar who was granted grace is in the forty-eighth.

135. Hari Kanoba, a resident of Bombay, and Somadev Swami, who had a malicious mind, came to Shirdi to test the saint, with pride in their hearts.

136. As soon as the *darshan* was taken, they were told what their intentions were and both were right away ashamed. They were attracted to Sai's feet and their sins of many lives were obliterated.

137. While sitting near Baba, Chandorkar's mind was disturbed and his

emotions were aroused by seeing a beautiful woman. This story is narrated in the forty-ninth.

138. Raghunath's son (i.e. Govindrao Dabholkar) gives in detail the meaning of "*Tadviddhi Pranipatena*" giving arguments in support and justification, in the fiftieth.

139. How Dixit Hari Sitaram, the devotee Balaram Dhurandhar and an advocate named Pundalik of Nanded, arrived initially at Shirdi

140. each one's story is marvellous! Hearing them the listeners were amazed and their devotional feelings were aroused. All this is narrated in the fifty-first.

141. After reviewing the book, Hemad asked for a boon—that the wickedness of the evil-minded be destroyed and that the virtuous are protected.

142. Surrendering at the *Sadguru*'s feet and offering him his head and his pen, the book is completed and his objective is achieved in the fifty-second.

143. Govindrao completed the series of chapters of Sree Sai *Satcharita* in this manner. I lovingly bow to his feet and also to the Guru, who is the Mother of the whole universe.

144. Giving the summary of each chapter is itself called the *Avataranika*. It is the right or virtuous path for those desirous of attaining liberation.

145. It may be scornfully neglected considering it to be a ragged border for a beautiful mantle, or robe. But this humble one appeals to the clever listeners to hear it once.

146. Just as a black mark is put on the forehead of a plump, lovely child to ward off the evil eye, Bal (Deo) has applied this black mark in the form of this *Avataranika* to this robe.

147. The beautiful book is like a well-flavoured meal and the chapters are like the different items. Buttermilk is necessary for digesting such a meal, if heartily partaken. This *Avataranika* is written for that purpose.

148. The book is the ever-fruitful, wish-fulfilling cow and each of the chapters are holy and pure. The ''*Avataranika*' is the necklace of black beads put round the neck to avert the evil or malignant eye.

149. So be it. I will explain to the best of my ability the method that Pant Hemad uses for the compilation of the chapters. Listeners should hear it with respect.

150. At the outset, there is praise for the *Sadguru* and then there is

narration of the *Vedant*, description of Sai as *Brahman* Incarnate, followed by narration of experiences.

151. To begin with, Hemad was well-versed in *shastra* and literature; and with the propitiation of *Sadguru* Sai he was overnight turned into a genius, so that he could create this book like a well-flavoured meal.

152. He, who experiences its sweetness and goodness, will find that the cycle of birth and death has ended; and the legacy of the liberation will certainly be received.

153. How can the grandeur of the book be described when it has Hemad's lucid language and the sacrament of Sai. Truly, it is the mixture of milk and sugar cane juice.

154. There may be many authors but they do not have the authority of sacramental language for which a real *Sadguru* is needed, who is the Support of the Universe, and the Consort of Rama.

155. Even if the *shastras* are studied, such a book cannot be written without the Guru's Grace. This is absolutely true.

156. Who can describe Sree Sai *Satcharita*! How incomparably worthy is the book! For which an author like Hemadpant was found. It is the supreme good fortune for seekers of liberation.

157. As long as the book exists on this earth, its fame will spread amongst the people. Govindrao has given a timely abundance of wealth for the seekers of liberation.

158. Twice blessed is this surpassing book. which is the outcome of Sai *Sadguru*'s favour. It will be honoured by seekers of liberation and it will overcome their poverty of thought.

159. Because of the store of good deeds done in innumerable past lives, Govindrao got this opportunity to do this service for Sai, which bore sweet fruit in the authorship of this book.

160. Hemad Pant was a staunch devotee, poet and fond of the knowledge to be gained from the *Vedant*. He was devotedly attached to Sai's feet, day and night.

161. The subject of *Vedant* is very deep. Without the combination of detachment, devotion and knowledge and the grace of the Guru, it is impossible to write such a book.

162. These are not chapters but sockets of gold in which the priceless gems of the stories have been studded and from which sparks of knowledge and meaning have been drawn by Govindrao with an immense effort.

163. The different chapters are the fragrant garlands of flowers offered to the neck of Sree Sai *Sadguru* by Govind, the loving child, to the best of his ability and with pure devotion.

164. The various chapters are pure pots of gold which are filled with Sree Sai *Satcharita*, like the waters of the Ganges, by the son of Raghunath, to drive away the pride of the seekers of liberation.

165. In the canopy of the battlefield of various books, the son of Raghunath has raised victory pillars of the chapters for destroying the demons of evil feelings, deceit and false pride, with the sword of his intellect.

166. The book is a five-wick lamp, studded with gems to wave round the king among Saints. The chapters narrate the stories which are wicks of oil, the light of which brings detachment and peace.

167. The book is *Maya* which entices the world. The chapters are arms raised high and the meaning of the stories are bracelets (worn on the upper arm) decorating the body ready to embrace Sai, *Brahman* Incarnate.

168. The Sai *Satcharita* is the universal sovereign amongst books. The chapters are pleasing, clever minstrels, narrating faith, knowledge, the *Vedantic* beauty and its vast glory.

169. The Sai *Satcharita* is the market place for spirituality and each chapter therein is an emporium. The stories of the experiences are the objects fully stocked there, arranged neatly by the greatest among the poets.

170. The book is formidable as the span of the Ganges. The chapters are the compact *ghats* of just proportions. The flow of stories is sweet as nectar and vast, by the Guru's Grace and formidable greatness.

171. It is not just a book but a wish-fulfilling tree, which the people engrossed in mundane existence find barren but for the seekers of liberation it gives only the actual experience of liberation.

172. This alone can be called a real memorial which destroys the darkness and tribulations of the mundane existence and saves from the hell of greed and illusion. It is certainly a giver of peace.

173. The author, Govindrao by being a bee at the lotus feet of Sai *Sadguru*, always savours the newly drawn sweet honey.

174. His surname was Dhabholkar and he was engaged in serving the British government. He was learned, full of humility, well-behaved and well-qualified.

175. Rakhumabai was his wife, virtuous, devoted and full of good

qualities, dedicated to her husband and always submissive. She had confirmed faith in Sai.

176. Dapoli, near Vengurla, was the original place of domicile of the poet. Later on Kelva was the village, for the family forefathers.

177. In '*Shake*' 1781 (1859 A.D.) on the 5th day of the dark fortnight of Margashir month, the blessed and meritorious Govind was born to Lakshmi, the wife of Raghunath.

178. He belonged to the Goud Saraswat Brahmins caste and to the Bharadwaj *gotra*. He died at the age of seventy in Shake 1851, on the ninth day of the dark fortnight of Ashad month.

179. In '*Shake*' 1844 (1922 A.D.), in the month of Chaitra, he commenced writing this book and completed upto the fifty-second chapter by Shake 1851 (1929 A.D.), in the month of Jeshtha.

180. Govindrao had only one son and five daughters of which four were married. The son was also married and was studying medicine; and the unmarried daughter was also doing the same.

181. Now I shall mention the procedure of recitation (of the book), as well as the easy method of doing a reading within seven days, as laid down in the Gurucharitra or other such books. Listeners are requested to pay attention.

182. Do the recitation with a pure heart and devotion, completing it in one day or two days or three days. Sai Narayan will be gratified.

183. Otherwise, complete it easily in a week and you will have immense good fortune on a continuing basis. Sai will fulfil the heart's desire and the fear of the worldly existence will be destroyed.

184. Begin the recitation on a Thursday, in the early morning after a bath. Sit on your *asan* (seat for prayer), after quickly completing your usual routine.

185. Make a pleasing, large canopy with banana plants, *kardali* [2], and beautiful cloth covering over it and let it be well-decorated.

186. In it, let there be a raised platform (for the book) and decorate all the four sides of it with colourful *rangoli* [3], which are pleasing for the eyes.

187. Making an image of Sai *Sadguru* or taking a beautiful picture of him, place it carefully on the high platform. Make obeisance to him with love.

188. Tying the book in a silken cloth, place it near the *Sadguru*. After worshipping both with *panch upachar*, [4] commence the reading.

189. Observe the holy vows[5] for eight days, having only milk or fruits or

roasted grain of any one kind, eating only once or having only one meal.

190. Facing the east and keeping the image of the *Sadguru* in the heart, do the recitation of the book with a calm mind and with joy.

191. During the seven days, read the first eight chapters on the first day, then the next eight on the second day, followed by next seven on the third day. Then eight, six, eight and seven chapters on the following four days, and only *Avataranika* on the eighth day.

192. On the eighth day, at the end of the observance of vows and of the offering of *naivedya* to Sai Narayana, feed friends, relatives and Brahmins with delicacies and give *dakshina* to them to the best of one's ability.

193. Inviting the *Vedic* Brahmins, have them chant the *Vedas* at night, offer them sugar flavoured milk and give them a respectful send-off, after they are well satisfied in body and mind.

194. Finally, after doing obeisance at the *Sadguru*'s Feet, offer him appropriate *dakshina* and send that to the Treasury (of the Shirdi Sansthan) to augment the funds of the Sansthan.

195. Lord Sai will be gratified thereby, and he will bless the devotee. The snake in the form of the worldly existence will be destroyed and the treasure of liberation will be revealed to him.

196. Listeners, may you feel at home with the Saint. You may forget the *Avataranika*, but keep an eye on the meaning of the book. This is the earnest request of this humble one, at your feet.

197. Virtuous listeners, be very merciful to this humble one till the end of time. I place my head at your feet. Baba's Bal prays thus to you.

198. Whatever is very deficient, attribute it to me. Take the essence, you listeners, and act in such a way that the mind is resplendent.

199. Obeisance to Sai, the son of Shiva (i.e. Ganesha); obeisance to Sai, seated on the Lotus (i.e. Brahmadev): obeisance to Sai, the killer of the demon Madhu (i.e. Vishnu). Obeisance to Sai, the five-faced Lord (i.e. Shiva).

200. Obeisance to Sai, the son of Atri (i.e. Datta); obeisance to Sai the killer of the demon Paka (i.e. Indra); obeisance to Sai, the lover of the night (i.e. the Moon); obeisance to Sai, the Lord of Fire.

201. Obeisance to Sai the Consort of Rukmani, Obeisance to Sai the Sun of the Mind; obeisance to Sai the Ocean of Knowledge; obeisance to Sree Sai, *Dñyaneshwara*.

202. The *Avataranika* is the verbal *pushpanjali* (offering of flowers). Similar is the obeisance of glorious names which I have prayed offering them at the feet of the Guru. Mother Sai be gratified.

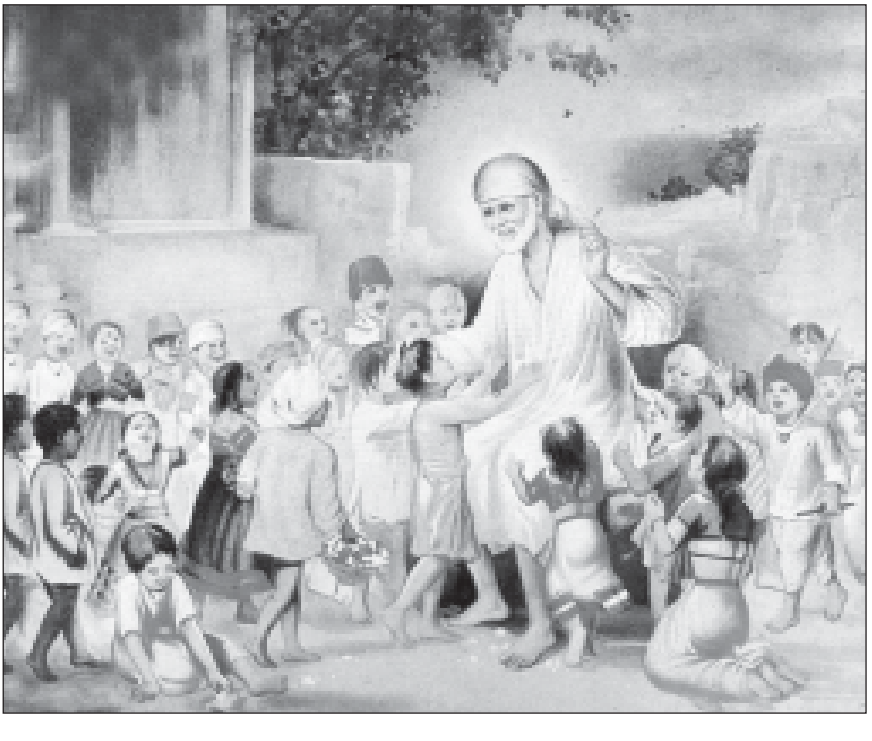
This is the end of the fifty-third chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by Baba's slave, Bal, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "*Avataranika*" (Epitome).

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. The story is given in Chapter 11 in respect of Dr. Pandit, so it is no longer being printed in Chapter 42 of the *Satcharit*.
2. Banana like plant with flowers.
3. Designs made on the ground (floor) with coloured, powdered chalk.
4. Sandalwood paste, flowers, incense, light and *naivedya*.
5. Bathing and wearing clean clothes, fasting, remaining pure and moral, celibate, and sleeping on the floor.



Baba was fond of playing with children